Laura Platero (00:00:00):

Good morning. Are we on now? Okay, awesome. Good morning everyone; tribal leaders and everyone else on the call. This is an update from the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board. My name is Laura Platero and I'm the Executive Director of the health board. And so just wanted to share that the board has been very active in responding to all of the inquiries, requests, support, technical assistance from tribes in our area. We have set up a webpage with information and which constantly is being updated. We are having our tribal only call at 10:00 AM this morning and the login information is on our website. If you'd like to hear more from our tribes, we do get a lot of the tribal health directors on that call. If you were interested in participating in that call, we welcome you to join that call.

We also are hosting, just to share a little bit more information about what we're doing. We are having a clinic call on Mondays at noon for basically tribal health providers who would like to know more about COVID19. It's a very clinical webinar that's every Monday; so that's something that has been happening. We've had two so far and we will continue to do those on Monday. They are available and they are recorded so they are available so you can watch them after. We also want to let you all know that there is a model tribal isolation and quarantine plan webinar being hosted by the American Indian Health Commission on Wednesday at 9:00 AM and they have been doing a wonderful job of getting information out to tribes as well.

And just to share some of the other sort of policy positions and things that we’ve been doing. One big thing that we just did last Friday was our Executive Committee passed a resolution basically declaring a public health emergency, since we are the public health authority, for the tribes in our area. And we also made strong recommendations for tribe to basically mitigate the spread of the virus by taking, of course, only having non-essential services go forward. But also we have been asking for tribes to put stay at home orders. We believe that this is the only way we're going to keep the virus from spreading. We are anticipating this will last awhile; our resolution does say we're going to plan for up to 18 months. in terms of just thinking ahead and trying to sort of plan for our organization and the tribes we work for we are also supporting any tribe who might need some technical assistance in this area.

If they would like to move forward in any type of order for their community. Our chairman also has been active and sent out a letter yesterday to our tribes letting them know what Lummi is doing; they’ve done also a shelter in place as has Makah and other tribes. I think other tribes are also jumping on board with that and just to keep their communities safe. So we have been very active with all of you and we are tracking the numbers for the tribes in our area. We're in the process of collecting that information. Some tribes have been more vocal about the cases in their communities while other tribes haven't, of course that's confidential information. And we always of course honor that that is what we do. So at some point soon we'll be able to share some numbers as we continue to collect information from our tribes in terms of what is going on and how it's impacting our specific communities. Does anyone have any questions?
Terri Parr (00:04:28):
Laura, can you give us current numbers in our region?

Laura Platero (00:04:36):
Sure. So in our region; Idaho, there are 50 cases. In Oregon, there's 191 with 5 deaths. And in Washington there's 2210 cases with 110 deaths.

Speaker 3 (00:04:59):
And we understand a few of those in Washington are from some of our communities, correct?

Laura Platero (00:05:07):
That's correct. Yes Okay.

Leonard Forsman (00:05:21):
I know you've been following the congressional activity, but I know that there's been some funding set aside for the IHS and I read where they are going to give out the rules of distribution, later this week. Have you heard any more about that?

Laura Platero (00:05:56):
No, I know for the 64 million I think the plan is to get those out via compacts and contracts, but I haven't heard any more detail on that. In terms of the other funding; the 80 million, we still are waiting for a detail that has been really long delayed; 40 million is supposed to be to tribes, tribal organizations and urban Indian programs. And we're still waiting for the detail on that. There was also 30 million that will basically go through the CDC umbrella grants that tribal epicenters have. But we still have information on, on how that will work either.

Victoria Warren-Mears (00:06:49):
I just wanted to update you that request for proposal for the epicenter funds just was released about five minutes ago.

Laura Platero (00:06:58):
Okay, that's great. Thank you Victoria. Can you share more about that?

Victoria Warren Mears (00:07:03):
I haven't pulled it down and looked at it, but it is for the umbrella agreement people only. So I assume that those tribes that have the 1803 CDs can also can apply for it. We will be applying for those tribes that can, I believe Lummi, possibly Makah and Kalispell, have that mechanism themselves, so they can look for that as well. The 1802 also went out so that NIHB can apply for that too.
Laura Platero (00:07:41):
Okay, great. Thank you Victoria for the update. And that's on the 30 million of the total 80 million of that first appropriation. Thank you.

Leonard Forsman (00:07:51):
One more thing Nick Lewis texted and he can't get on the call. I tried calling in, Terr, i and it's not letting anybody in. It's saying it's busy when people try to call in. So I don't know if there's anything we can do about that.

James Parker:
We are working on this - we're also recording this so we will be able to share it. so I'll be working on it right now. Our apologies.

Chas:
Ron Allen has a question in the chat box: Are we tracking how many Indians contracted COVID19 and/or died?

Laura Platero (00:09:03):
Thank you Chairman Allen for your question. So yes, we are in the process of collecting that information. We don't have numbers at this point to share, but we are, our epicenter is in the process of collecting that information and so we will have some numbers to share it.

Terri Parr (00:09:25):
Any other questions?

Terri Parr (00:09:32):
Brian, are you on?

Chas:
Okay. One comment from M Hill is our IHS and HHS do not have broadband internet. This keeps our case workers from being able to do what they need to do for children's and families. That was just a comment. I don't know if somebody wants to apply to that. Ron Allen also asked another question, how do we track what IHS is doing, getting supplies to our clinics.

Laura Platero (00:10:43):
Thank you. I think I can answer that last question in Victoria. I would ask Victoria to jump in if she has any more to add. We have heard from tribes in terms of, at least for our area, I can't speak for nationwide. We do know that IHS did put out a call for the N95 mask if anyone had an order and they took orders up until March 17th and they distributed those. And so I have a list
of those tribes at least that copied me on those supplies and I haven't heard from any other tribes after that time. To my knowledge, I think most of the tribes in our area did actually request those N95 masks. And Victoria, I don't know if you have any more to add about how we're tracking what supplies HIS is getting out to the tribes

Victoria Warren-Mears (00:11:40):
Well part of the information that we will begin tracking probably tomorrow or the next day from you all is your current supplies. Another thing to mention for Idaho tribes is there is a request on our website which is www.npaihb.org / COVID-19. For the Idaho tribes there is a request for ordering supplies from the state of Idaho. And because the case count in Idaho is still relatively low, I would suggest that you get that order in now. I'm sure that Idaho eventually will be running low on supplies as well. And for those of you from other States, like Oregon, I wasn't on the call this morning, so I don't know where that stands at this point in time, but if those of you that are not in our Washington, Oregon or Idaho region, if you're calling in from another region, you may want to check with your state departments of health to see what they will be able to mobilize for you. And especially if you have a smaller number of cases right now.

Laura Platero (00:12:54):
And Victoria is fielding all of our calls on COVID19. She's the main person to contact with your specific questions. You're always welcome to call me as well. But Victoria, if you want to give yourself phone number, that would be great.

Victoria Warren-Mears (00:13:15):
Sure. I just typed it in the chat box too for those of you who can see that. But my number is (503) 998-6063. And that is a cell phone, so you can feel free to text me questions as well as call me, whichever will work best for you.

Chas (00:13:41):
Justin from Lummi said that they purchased a dozen Verizon hotspots, which they are delivering to people's homes for telemedicine. And then Crystal Hottowe, we mentioned that she has policy information about broadband to share.

Crystal Hottowe (00:14:02):
Good morning everyone. We're working on trying to get some federal funds loosened up from the Universal Service Administration company. They're the ones that distribute subsidies for telemedicine, telehealth, schools and libraries, high cost areas and low-income customers. Broadband has not been included on any of the stimuli. It's important that we start to really advocate for that because tribal communities are the ones who are suffering the most as far as broadband connectivity. The hotspots are a great idea that is being deployed quickly and to many people. The only thing about that is that when you utilize hotspots, there's the assumption that there's cell phone coverage and not all tribes have the cell phone coverage that's necessary for those hotspots. So while they're a good stop gap measure we really, as
tribal leaders, need to start advocating for broadband connectivity as well. Both Danae and I are working on letters that can be sent to our congressional representatives so we can start pushing that.

Terri Parr (00:15:29):
Any other questions for Laura or the health board?
Brian, you're on now?

Brian Gunn (00:15:42):
I can tell you kind of what I know at this point, which is NCAI and the various tribal advocates have been working pretty feverously over the past few days to get tribal priorities into what is now being numbered as the third stimulus package. The first one was earlier this month before the COVID19 became a pandemic. The second one was the family's first Corona Virus Response Act, that was signed into law last week. And there were some tribal provisions in there. There was a $64 million for IHS and then a couple of other tribal references throughout.

The bill that is in play now appears to be the Senate Republican draft or the Senate majority draft of a third stimulus bill. It’s a large bill. There've been multiple drafts that have been circulated up and through this morning. But part A of the bill contains various provisions that change programs; like regulatory fixes, unemployment fixes, sort of more policy type changes. And part B of the bill is more of a traditional appropriations bill, where it's adding money to existing accounts, including for tribes. The big picture is that the Senate draft includes some significant new amounts of money for tribal programs in Part B, the appropriation section. I think Laura may have talked about IHS. I think it's slated for just over a billion dollars of new money in IHS and I think it's like 453 million for BIA and some other amounts for BIE. About half of that money, I think across the board, would go out to tribes through tribal shares through the regular formula distribution.

The one part that tribes weren't really included in, at least as explicitly was, this economic stabilization fund that was really drafted and looked like for large companies or publicly traded companies. Tribes are eligible for it. But it’s mostly a loan guarantee type of program. So when the text came out, I think NCAI really wanted to focus its efforts on trying to get some kind of grant component and some kind of set aside amount in that $400 billion economic stabilization fund for Indian country that would be grant based. There's just been a lot of activity, you know, across the board, tried to reach out to the committees of jurisdiction and whatnot. As you probably saw from the news, these negotiations is sort of ebbs and flows.

There were public statements one side accusing the other side of different things. But the negotiations continued and apparently, from all the reports is that the Senate negotiators are close to an agreement in the text that the bill is supposed to have. The final version is supposed to be released within the next hour or so; we'll see if that holds. We don't really know yet
within the Senate bill, but there were efforts to get additional tribal provisions into, this Senate bill. Meanwhile the house of representatives drafted its own version of a third stimulus bill. And similarly, that went through different drafts. Those were disseminated, the latest texts that I've seen of the house bill was from about seven just after 7:00 PM last night Eastern time. And that bill is similar to the Senate bill, but it hasn't a lot more stuff in it.

Most notably, it has a provision that would set aside $10 billion for basically payroll and other types of economic relief assistance to Indian tribes. And the way that drafted it would be calculated based on the tribe or the tribal enterprises payroll losses and would be used for basically costs associated with the COVID19 response. So that's something that NCAI and NIGA really kind of focused their attention on was to try to get some kind of big, big dollar pot for tribes that would be essentially an economic relief type of money. There is a lot of stuff in the House bill. If the Senate reaches agreement on its bill today, you know, the House bill won't be voted on, the House bill will sort of be left hanging out there.

I'm just speculating here, I don't know, but just given how this crisis is evolving, I think it's likely that the House folks would continue with the provisions in their bill that work in the Senate pass bill and keep trying to move them forward. So, the big pictures is we're waiting to see what happens with the Senate today, what their final version looks like, which should be forthcoming. I think it's fair that if the final draft does get released and that will mean that there is an agreement and, I think the House has already indicated that if the Senate negotiators reach agreement that they'll go ahead and pass the Senate passed bill. But all of that being said, if there's tribal priorities that aren't in this Senate bill, if it materializes today, I think the thought is there's going to be multiple bills going forward to address COVID19 and that there'll be other opportunities to get those issues addressed. So that's kind of what I know at this point. I will say this NCAI has done a really say I feel like it's been a really good job in coordinating, coordinating the different lawyer, lobbyist folks. I don't know if there's anybody up from NCAI on the call, but in my experience working with them on different work group calls and trying to get stuff pulled together, they've done a really, really good job and everybody ought to be proud of that. That's all I have. Any questions?

Leonard Forsman (00:23:06)

Thanks for the shout out for NCAI. I'll pass that on the Kevin and Fawn. there was some push to try to get some treaty fishermen aid. I'm not sure if that survived in either of the bills.

Brian Gunn (00:23:29):

Yes, the treaty fishermen provision was in the economic development and employment parity part of what NCAI had put forward. It wasn't in either the Senate version of the bill or the House version. That being said, I think the House version, that economic impact fund, that $10 billion fund, that would definitely leave the door open to having a source of revenue to provide relief to tribal fishermen; it's the way I read it. But it's not in the Senate drafts that I've seen. I think if it's not in the final one, which is probably unlikely to be if it hasn't been in any of the drafts. I think that's something that we'll just need to kind of, you know, put our heads together and keep pushing forward on with other moving vehicles. But I know a lot of time
went into drafting that language to make it as inclusive as possible. So I think we'll just have to wait to see what, what comes out today and then if it's not in there, just keep pushing ahead.

Leonard Forsman(00:24:49):
Okay. Any other questions for Brian? All right, well thank you.

Chas:
Question – can we get a table with all three phases thus far spelled out with dollar amounts and an idea of how much the Portland Area will get to disseminate? From Stanfield

Brian Gunn(00:25:35):
This is Brian and I think the table would probably need to come from the IHS and Northwest regional offices because they would know based on the share allocation, how much you’d be getting that would go down to the tribes. It would obviously be dependent on what the final amounts are. But big picture, the way I read it, assuming the money in IHS and BIA and BIE are as we believe it to be in the Senate drafts. For the IHS portion, I think it's 45% is supposed to be distributed in accordance with tribal shares. I think it'd be up to IHS to figure out what the shares are and how much the Area would get and how much each tribe will get. I would say that once there's final action on the bill on the next IHS and BIA calls, I would request, Dean and Brian Mercier and their staff come up with those numbers.

Terri (00:27:26):
Okay, any other questions for Brian? Chas Is there anything else in the chat box?

Chas (00:27:33):
Chairman Allen had a question for Laura earlier and she typed a response to him. I could read the question and read the response if you’d like:

Chairman Allen asked Laura, do you know the distribution formula for the COVID19 testing and when it will reach the Northwest?.

Laura responds, Chairman Allen on the IHS call yesterday IHS talked yesterday about most of the funds going through tribal shares, but there was a lot of talk about getting some of the funds to tribes and hotspots. They said they would send out a DTLL about it with the earliest distribution on Thursday or Friday.

Terri Parr(00:28:33):
Okay. Thank you, Brian. We appreciate it. No other questions for Brian? Is Chairman Solomon from Lummi on the call?
Chairman Solomon (00:29:00):
Yes.
Hopefully Dr. Wasaci is on. Just an update and kind of what Lummi Nation is working on. March 3rd Lummi Nation declared a state of public health emergency and then we've been doing what we can to support our public health team. On Sunday night, March 22nd, we did a shelter in place order. One thing that we're working on and we're running into some challenges is with the 1135 waiver for the Lummi hospitals. I will turn it over to Justin

Justin (00:30:10):
Okay, thanks. I'll give a quick overview of what we've been doing here from the public health side and then specifically talk about our plans to set up an alternate care site field hospital. So we've tested 103 patients so far within the community and we had 8 positive cases. I think we're publishing this on our Facebook page, as they come up. That gives us about a 7% positive rate, which actually parallels Washington State right now. Whatcom County, unfortunately is much higher; as of today its 13% positive and that is because there is a cluster within the nursing home.

One issue around the country, specifically in Washington State, is that there very likely going to be a shortage of hospital beds throughout the region. And you see that represented by the U S Navy or Army sending the mercy ship to Los Angeles. It was supposed to go to Seattle. You also see evidence of that with Shoreline, which is a city North of Seattle putting up a 200-bed tent hospital. We anticipate that the hospitals throughout the region are going to be over capacity. And so we decided to set up an alternative care site, field hospital in one of our gymnasiums. We've been working on that for the last couple of weeks. I think the guidance, if there's any guidance we could provide about doing that, is understanding what each tribe's capacity is for providing that level of care. For us, we believe we can offer IV antibiotics and IV fluids. I believe we can also offer supplemental oxygen provide 24/7 physician level care. Obviously, every tribe's going to have to decide what their staffing capacity is and what their physical infrastructure is. But I think it's very rational to start planning for the event that, many low acuity patients who present to local hospitals will be either turned away or discharged earlier than they would have. Um, in other circumstances.

Speaker 6 (00:33:19):
What are the ages of the patients?

Speaker 9 (00:33:24):
[inaudible]

Speaker 9 (00:33:45):
[inaudible]
Chas (00:33:45):
There are no more questions in the chat box yet, but Victoria does post a link to the chat box for more information with the Indian Health Board.

Leonard (00:33:59):
I had a quick question. I know that most of us are going to have to rely on the public health system outside of our own facilities. Suquamish doesn't have a clinic, so we're definitely relying on the public health system. Port Gamble's been supportive. So, we've been working with Jeremy and them as well. I see this obviously as a problem or a challenge or hopefully, if we keep the curb down, um, we'll be able to address this. But I don't know how much people have been thinking about that. Obviously, the health professionals, but thinking about it, but any quick thoughts on that.

Justin (00:34:45):
There's epidemiological modeling outright now that suggest that we are actually too late for mitigation strategies and it's almost inevitable that the hospitals, will be overcrowded. I hope that's not true, but that's what the models say.

Chas (00:35:05):
And then Victoria says she's going to need to sign off. Patricia Whitefoot asked what are the ages of the patients and Victoria did respond. The majority of the patients are over 40 in the Northwest.

Justin (00:35:18):
The Lummi public health departments sharing all of this information as it comes out on our Facebook page under the Lummi Tribal Health Center.

Chas (00:35:31):
And there's another comment on the chat from L Anderson. I have been in contact with the VA for beds and masks. They will be getting supplies at the end of this week and said they will check to see what they may have and be able to share.

James Parker (00:36:33):
I think the next agenda item is a Census 2020 update. We have Shana Radford, Alania Capoeman and Sea-ah-dom Edmo available for updates. Okay. Proceed with the census.

Alaina Capoeman (00:37:03):
Good morning everyone. Thanks for the time. I'm Alania Capoeman and I'm a Tribal Partnership Specialist in Washington state. Hopefully you've all seen that the timelines are being pushed
back for operations. One thing that we're, and I think Shana is going to go more into that, we're really hoping tribal leadership can encourage their citizens to go online. It's really the safest and easiest way to respond to a census and everybody should have gotten their invitations at this point. If they haven't, please reach out to your Tribal Partnership Specialist and we will engage with operations and see what's going on.

Some were trying to get creative too with how to do outreach. All the events have been canceled. We did a lot of work setting up the outreach and engagement activities. But as you know, they've all been canceled at this point. So really it's online engagement, emails trying to set up online parties, maybe getting some information into the supply boxes, food boxes to elders, the diaper packs to the babies through Head start. And so hopefully your tribal liaisons or if there's another contact, we'd appreciate getting that. We know essential staff is only in the offices, but we have a lot of material we can still get out to tribal members. So any help on that front would be greatly appreciated. I know we only have a couple of minutes. Shana, do you want to go into your topics?

Shana Radford (00:38:35):

I'm the Tribal Partnership Specialist for Oregon and Idaho and I also serve as a Congressional Liaison for Oregon and Idaho. Just a couple of updates along with what Alania already shared. We have listening sessions coming up. We can get those to Terri and James to share; but I did send them out to folks. Those are coming up on April 2nd and April 9th and that really goes over our disclosure avoidance system and making sure that the respondent's information is kept confidential and how that does look or impact tribes. The other thing was we have that there's a census rumor going around right now that the census responses are tied to this potential stimulus package. So I just wanted to let people know that that's a rumor; that your answers cannot be used to impact your eligibility for any government benefits, including any potential stimulus package.

In regards to the adjustments, as Alania said, we do have the sheet that's attached, I think that James sent out pretty much either delaying, extending or basically moving the dates a couple of weeks. We did extend the self response period or phase from July 31st to April 14th. That's one of the big ones. Basically the main things that are still on track are I'm getting the account to the president and then the redistricting getting the account to the States April 1st of 2021. And of course we will remain flexible and adapt as everything is evolving as well. So, just in the sake of time, we can leave questions for later, but I wanted to extend a little bit of time to our tribal nonprofit partners to talk a little bit about what they're doing. So I'm going to hand it over to Se-ah-dom.

Se-ah-dom Edmo (00:40:33):

Thanks Shana. I'm the Tribal Community Coordinator for We Count Oregon. We Count as the kind of mirroring what the Bureau has done, has ceased all of our activities as of two weeks ago, indefinitely. And I just want to underscore the opportunity that we see for tribes to come together around potentially pushing, the report dates out. I know Shana shared that right now,
some of the dates that are remaining the same on the report that's going to the president. But to avoid politicizing hard to count communities. So of which Indian country is one. So right now we're focusing on keeping our community members healthy and safe. But if we keep to the dates that we currently have, by getting the report to the President by the end of the year and such, I think that our hard to count communities, in Indian countries specifically will be severely under counted.

I think it's important that we come together and send, as tribal communities, a message right now if we can, that we need an extension on that reporting to the President. So, if that's something folks are interested in, I am interested in coordinating a letter and response and I'll work with our sister organizations now ha NA Elahi fund up in Washington state and Western Native Voiceover in Montana to push that out and include tribes in the West. We're pushing all of our census response online. And I also think it's an opportunity. Somebody mentioned it on the call earlier about broadband access. We are working with partners at Comcast and other internet providers to amplify signals in rural communities.

And I do think, you know, separate from any stimulus packages that are moving through government. Those of us who are working in the nonprofit field can help and assist bringing and connecting business who desires to do their work in ways that support and uphold tribal sovereignty. Connecting, making those connections with Indian country in the West. So really using the census right now in the work that we need to do that we're counting all of our folks to amplify and bring more resources toward Indian country in the West as a whole. Thank you. And I'll hand it over to the next agenda item

Chaz (00:44:09):
Alania also shared a link on the 2020 census website that allows tribes to see how their tribal response rate is, is doing relative to the nationwide response rate. And then Shana also shared a link to the 2020 census.

Shana Radford (00:44:34):
Can I just say one more thing really quick?

Thank you. I just wanted to just really, really emphasize that right now is the time that it's a little bit chaotic but right now is the time to really send a message about stay home, stay safe. But you can do your census right now, either online, by phone or sending in. We really need our partners to kind of get creative and also be sending these messages out while you're sending out other COVID 19 messages. So that'd be great. Thank you.

Chaz (00:45:06):
And if someone lost their mailing form, can they still respond to the census?

Alania (00:45:14):
Yes. You don't need to have the code that's on your invitation that was delivered to your house. You can just go on the link that Shana posted the 2020 census.gov and it, there's a link that says 'respond now'. Just go ahead and do that. That's great. How many tribes are doing like
incentives or little contest if you send in your confirmation page? So when you complete your census online at the very end, you'll get a page that says, thank you for completing the census. Here's your confirmation code. You can save it as a PDF or just as a screenshot. We're encouraging tribes to do that. To get people a little excited, have a little fun with the census.

James Parker (00:46:08):
All right. Any questions?

Leonard Forsman (00:46:16):
Yeah. I got my done, it took two minutes. I was just going to say that if you guys could use your social media Influence people to get on and do it. It's really easy. And we got plenty of people to help. I was going to ask a question about counting. I think some of our people will know people that are homeless or transitional or whatever in our communities. And is there a plan to help those, for us to provide that information, I do not know how you are going to handle that.

Alania Capoeman (00:47:10):
They can complete it on cell phones. So if you, I mean six feet away from them, but if they have their own phone, they can go ahead and go onto that same website link. The operation that will do the sweep across the nation to count people experiencing homelessness. Maybe they're in a car, maybe they're under bridges, that sort of thing. That has been pushed back. And in Washington state, the operations coordinator is just saying right now everything's on hold and more information to come as he kind of assesses the situation and make sure that all the enumerators are safe, that the people that are being contacted are safe too. So right now everything's kind of in a holding pattern, but at least pushed back a month. If you know someone that is experiencing homelessness, they can go online. That is the last information I heard.

Maybe Shana can correct me if she heard something more current, is that like if you have a couch surfer, like my cousin was sleeping on our couch, he should fill out his own form. So my family who normally resides here and majority of the time would all be on one. And then the person that's temporarily staying with us would fill out their own form online. There's a little box that says 'are you experiencing homelessness or is this your usual residence'? So just kind of follow those directions online

Chas (00:48:27):
Se-ah-dom shared a link with We Count Oregon.com/native-American-communities. I'm not sure what's in there, but she did share that link.

Then Rosina said that she has not yet done her survey, but she will get it done today. And Chairman Allen said he's done it and so has his kids.
Excellent. Once again, we're recording this this meeting, we'll make this video available along with all the links and everything provided on the ATNI website. Thank you Shana, and thank you Alania. Thank you Se-ah-dom. Up next we have Education Impacts. We'd like to hear from a Patsy Whitefoot, ATNI Education Committee Chair.

Patsy Whitefoot:

Morning everyone. Can you hear me? It's good to hear everyone's voice and to see those that are online. It's a good day today. Just with regard to our children, because I'm currently in a housing project where my son lives. I've just been with them for a while. But with regard to our children every day I'm able to see them run out to the school bus and be able to pick up their lunch and their breakfast, the meals that they're eligible for. While the focus of the paper that was done to Congress was on the BIE schools, this also includes our children that are in public schools as well. So nationwide with the 183 schools under the Bureau of Indian Affairs, this is something that continues to move forward. With regard to the BIE schools and the school closures as we know in all of our States.

But what this means for the Bureau of Indian Education schools, they've requested for additional funding for the schools for infrastructure and training. And the amount that they requested was I think about $20 million and basically what that was to get them through the remainder of the school year. Well, actually it was only for four weeks of the schooling and which includes Haskell, Indian Nations University and the Southwest Indian Polytech Institute in Albuquerque. And when I saw that letter, I thought, I don't think you're going to need more than, actually it was for 40 million for the four weeks to continue with BIE schooling. So, as we know and as we're hearing this, this virus is going to be here for a while and so there's definitely going to need to be an extension for the BIE schools. So what that's going to mean is that the schools are going to need to be extended and then perhaps early start for the next school year. And so that's going to be an issue in as, as we heard, it's going to be pushing back the timelines that everyone is operating under. A big push right now with regard to the BIE schools is providing for federal health benefits for all BIE school employees. While those benefits are provided for the BIE funded schools, the directs BIE schools, it's not necessarily funded for those that are under contracts or grants. And so there's amendment that has been inserted into the Indian Healthcare Improvement Act to allow for accessibility to the lower cost insurance, options for employees, which would be a significant savings. So that's with regard to BIE schools at the K-12 level. For the tribal colleges and universities again, which is funded under the Bureau of Indian education. As we know, we have two colleges here in the Northwest. We have, the Northwest Indian College and Salish Kootenai over in Montana. And so they're requesting 27 million for the immediate needs enclosure. And similar to K-12 schools is really having to take a look at the school year. When I was talking to the National Indian Education Association, it was reported that the schools are going to have to just probably be on closure throughout the school year. So the impact that this is going to have is, of course, for the students. While we might have, you know, places like Lummi that is
conducting their shelter in place. Students, like homeless communities as well, experience their education opportunities and their time in schools a little uniquely. Sometimes you might have students that are couch surfing as you heard previously.

And so those are the students that we need to make certain, that we're paying attention to. Also that we're helping to support their needs with food, basic supplies, basic bills if they have internet at home, then that accessibility as well. So that's going to be important for our college students and as well as our high school students for those that have accessibility to, to internet and throughout the letter there is of course the issue of just accessibility to internet non accessibility to E rate for students and communities. And so that results in, you know, the development of courses for students online. The need for appropriate equipment for our schools, but also for our students and their families. And of course this is going to impact career technical classes as well. So just to be able to say that, well, we could possibly go to online schooling.

That's not necessarily true for Indian country. And, and I think with this emergent need that we have, it's just showing us about those significant needs that we have in Indian country. Two other items that I want to address that the Bureau of Indian Education has highlighted is the need for funding out of the national emergency student financial aid, which is going to be supporting students in response to COVID19, looking at 1.2 billion. The tribal colleges and university are requesting $40 million from that. And so that's something we'll need to help advocate for, particularly for Northwest Indian college. Well, for all of the tribal colleges throughout the United States. And of course through ATNI we've been able to do that with our colleges. The final one is the postsecondary education institution funds the department of education is also going to be seeking that amount is 1.5 billion. And the tribal colleges and universities are requesting 46 million for infrastructure and the training needs of our communities. And so that's very brief focusing on the Bureau of Indian Education schools. But I do just want to say here in the state of Washington that our Washington Education Association has a survey that's gone out to take a look at some of the educational gaps that exist, particularly in Indian country, in our rural isolated communities. Of course I'm from White Swan and it's very rural. And when people start talking about, you know, having online courses that I'm thinking, many of our families in White Swan don't necessarily have internet access at home particularly in rural communities and you don't also don't always have access to food as well or just some of the basic needs. So that is a challenge, particularly for rural communities and reservation communities. Thank you. Be willing to take any questions or just feel free to email me later.

James Parker (00:57:27):
Thank you Patsy. I think we should probably hold the questions. We'll make sure Patsy's contact information is available. Next is Amber Schultz-Oliver, the ATNI Economic Development Corporation Director providing an update on economic impacts.

Amber Schultz-Oliver (00:57:52):
Thanks James. And thanks for the invitation to be on this call. We at ATNI EDC have really been focusing more on the impacts of small businesses, but I was just sent a letter from NCAI Native
CDI network, NAFOA; I'm just going to step through what the national ask has been around economic development and employment. So the letter outlines for immediate economic stabilization priorities; the first is to provide at least 20 billion allocated for direct federal relief brands to tribal governments and their enterprises in the form of a tribal fiscal stabilization fund under the US Department of Treasury. The second priority is to provide at least 2 billion for a tribal forbearance loan and guarantee fund allocated for assistance to tribal governments and their enterprises to replace lost revenue. Specifically, they're asking to provide 2 billion to a tribal loan guarantee fund to address credit emergencies and to provide tribal governments and enterprises temporary forbearance.

The third priority is to provide not less than $110 million in additional funding and wave restrictions on small business administration and treasury programs for Native American contractors and the native community development financial institutions to provide for emergency funds and waiver of program restrictions; specifically, for the Native American contractors. They'd like to allow tribal access to the SBA seven loan program to ensure that Native American contractors and participants in the SBA small disadvantaged business program can access COVID19 contracting opportunities. The provisions of the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act raising the cap on the sole source contracts should be applied to all federal agencies and exempt from the SPA from category management. Native American contractors should be included in relief provided to federal employees for native CDFI. They ask that no less than a 100 million be allocated to the native American CDFI assistance fund and to extend matching requirement waiver for native CDFIs receiving a native American CFI assistance awards.

Uh, the final priorities provide parody to ensure individual and employer emergency assistance is accessible to tribal governments and their enterprises and employees, ensuring inclusion of Indian tribes and tax credit for employers addressing unemployment insurance reimbursement disparities, protecting tribal fisheries and the suspension of 401k loan payments, extension of time period prior to 401k default and relaxed hardship distributions. Like I say, I wasn't involved with any of those conversations and as Brian Gunn reported earlier, there's already a lot of this language that's drafted. What I've heard is that these specific asks are not outlined in any of the bills, but as Brian also said, there'll be other opportunities and other bills to be able to push these priorities.

James Parker (01:01:36):
Okay. I don't think we have any questions at this time. I think we have one last agenda item of hearing from the membership who's available and on the call in terms of anything that they see as unique best practices that they'd like to share. Once again, I think what we're going to do is create a section on the ATNI website that can be a repository for a lot of this information so it can be shared out as well.

Leonard Forsman (01:02:15):
All right. Any last comments before we sign off? It seems like we'd be less busy working at home but that hasn’t been working that way for way for me. I just want to thank everybody for weighing in. I was just thinking this morning that our generations before us had been through
really tough times. You think about, you know, way back with the first epidemic set and then, you know, the boarding schools and World War II. And you know, even the civil rights era, Vietnam era, there's been a lot of tough times people and our elders have persevered through. So, there's a lot of things to be concerned about, but we have a lot of resilience to rely upon that and our creativity here in the Northwest. We'll let you know if we need to do any outreach to Congress. I know you can do it to some individual things, but most of it's just happening so fast. It's important that we stay in contact with that, especially with that scenario that Brian had about there being a future legislation is going to continue so they're getting emergency and legislation out more, but I think there'll be more coming. So with that, is there anybody else had anything last comments before we sign off?

James Parker(01:03:55):
President Forsman, we had a comment from Chairman Allen, how often does ATNI plan on these updates. So I believe it's Terri’s intent to have this weekly at the same time and to do the same process.

Leonard Forsman(01:04:17):
Yes, we'll probably start out weekly. You might expand out as time goes on; but definitely within the next 10 days.