



Kiowa Tribe

P.O. Box 369 · Carnegie, Oklahoma · 73015
Phone: (580) 699-1069 · Email: ntsoodle@kiowatribe.org
PUBLIC RELATIONS

April 24, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kiowa Tribe Discusses Stimulus Package Money Amid COVID-19

The \$2 trillion federal stimulus package includes \$8 billion in tribal coronavirus relief funds and \$2 billion in emergency funding for Indian Health Services, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and other federal programs that deal with the tribes.

The \$8 billion tribal coronavirus relief funds were intended to go only to the 574 tribes that have a government to government relationship with the United States. How the funds are allocated to each tribe was complicated when the Department of Interior added Alaskan Native Corporations as being eligible to participate in the funding. Several tribes have sued and are contesting the flawed decision. The payout of the funds was scheduled for April 24th, but this deadline was moved to April 28th pending a decision on the matter by a federal judge. The U.S. Treasury Department has not said how the actual allocation of the funding works. Each tribe was required to submit key data as a basis for allocation. The Kiowa Tribe has complied with the requirements of the U.S. Treasury and is poised to receive the funding.

Tribes plan to use the coronavirus relief funding to respond to the pandemic especially after shutting down their main sources of income generation—casinos, golf courses, and other vital business interests. The Kiowa Tribe closed its casino operations on March 19th. Casino management and the Kiowa Casino Operating Authority or KCOA are eyeing a re-opening but public health and safety remain a top priority in the decision making.

The CARES Act provides that the coronavirus relief funds may only be used to cover costs that are necessary expenditures due to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19. This means that expenditures must be used for actions taken to respond to the public health emergency and must be reasonably necessary. These funds cannot be used to cover shortfalls in tribal government revenue to cover expenditures that do not qualify under the Act. The Act allows a broad range of uses for the funding, but revenue replacement is not a permissible option.

Some nonexclusive examples of eligible expenditures:

- ❖ Expenses of establishing temporary, public medical facilities and other measures to increase COVID-19 treatment capacity
- ❖ Costs of providing COVID-19 testing, including serological testing
- ❖ Expenses for acquisition and distribution of medical and protective supplies including sanitizing products and personal protective equipment (PPE)
- ❖ Expenses for disinfection of public areas and other facilities
- ❖ Expenses for public safety measures undertaken in response to COVID-19
- ❖ Payroll expenses for public safety, public health, health care, human services, and similar employees who are dedicated to responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency
- ❖ Expenses for food delivery, for example to tribal elders and other vulnerable populations to comply with COVID-19 precautions

- ❖ Expenses to improve telework capabilities for employees to comply with COVID-19 precautions
- ❖ Any other COVID-19 related expenses reasonably necessary to the function of tribal government that satisfy the fund's eligibility criteria

The above are just a few of the areas where the money can be used. If the Tribe can justify the expenditure as COVID-19 related and the expenditure is reasonable, we should be able to make full use of the funding to the full benefit of the tribal membership.

The Kiowa Tribe will exercise reasonable judgment in expending these funds. Per capita payments to tribal members, severance payments to terminated employees, bonuses to employees other than hazard pay, or overtime as a result of COVID-19 activities are not eligible expenditures. Nor are expenses that will be reimbursed under any federal program.

Because the money comes with a high level of accountability and many strings attached, the Kiowa Tribe will implement appropriate accounting measures to satisfy any post-funding audit inquiries that the U.S. Treasury or other federal programs may undertake. The Kiowa Tribe looks forward to using the money to respond to the pandemic.