



KIOWA TRIBE

HIGHER EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM

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March 12, 2020

Potential mitigation activities for the Kiowa Tribe Higher Education Department

As we have researched the virus COVID-19 or Coronavirus Disease, we have found that it is a respiratory disease caused by a “new coronavirus” that was first identified in China and which has now been discovered in more than 100 locations internationally, to include the United States. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) states that the virus has been named “SARS-CoV-2,” and the disease it causes has been named “coronavirus disease 2019” (abbreviated “COVID-19”). Therefore, I have created this response in the event we have any staff member who becomes exposed to COVID-19.

According to the CDC, older adults and people who have severe underlying chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes are at a higher risk of developing severe complications from the COVID-19 illness. Currently, we do have employees in our department who fit this criterion and would likely experience severe health complications derived from COVID-19 if they were in contact with the virus. Although the likelihood of the rest of our staff developing high-risk complications is very low, our staff members interact face to face with tribal members, community members, and partner organizations daily putting them at risk of coming into contact with the virus.

COVID-19 is spreading quickly and sustainably in some affected geographic areas and has even been confirmed in Oklahoma, so the likelihood of infection is very high. To mitigate the possibility of contracting or adding to the spread of the disease, we are immediately taking action on the following:

- Taking daily precautions to keep space between ourselves and others
- When in a public setting, we aim to stay away from others who are sick, limit close contact, and wash hands often
- Avoid crowds as much as possible
- Avoid cruise travel and non-essential air travel
- Stay home as much as possible

- Regular disinfection of the workplace with extra care in high traffic areas
- Limit face to face meetings
- Cross-train staff
- Ensure staff knows the signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- If staff members are experiencing signs, they will be sent home and encouraged to make an appointment with their health care providers
- Ensure sanitizing products are available for staff and the public
- Post signage to educate staff and the public on best practices to avoid contracting or spreading infectious diseases such as COVID-19.
- Direct staff to visit the following website for the most up to date information regarding COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>

According to the CDC (Center for Disease Control), if a COVID-19 outbreak happens in our community, it could last for a long time. Depending on the outbreak severity, public health officials may recommend community actions to reduce people's risk of being exposed to COVID-19.

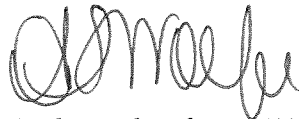
As of today, March 18th, we will follow the public health officials and the Kiowa Tribe's recommendations to take the necessary precautions. The Higher Education Department will enact any or all of the following with the approval of the Executive Director for our **Employees**:

- Approve staff to telework from home starting March 19,2020 until April 6, 2020
- Approve Administration Leave or Request the Administration to expand sick leave policies to account for viruses such as COVID-19. This includes the recommendation to develop and ensure flexible leave policies for staff who need to stay home due to school/childcare dismissals and to individuals who are sick or having symptoms of COVID-19.
- Staggering work schedules to decrease social contacts in the workplace.
- Eliminate large work-related gatherings (staff meetings, after-work functions, etc.)
- Postpone non-essential work travel
- Implement extended telework arrangements if necessary
- Consideration of the cancellation of any activities with a large number of expected guests, such as our Higher Education Banquet.

The Higher Education Department will offer services to our students with the approval of our Executive Director for our **Students/Clients**:

- Offer gas/travel reimbursement up to \$50.00 for students who had to abruptly leave their College/University to return home due to school closure
- Open our Anadarko Office for computer and internet use.
 - For students who do not have the capability to come to our office to use the computers, please call 580.654.6324 for other resources and options.
- Pay our Adult Vocational Students for the next 2 weeks at the full amount. If students miss a day, not due to school closure, their paycheck will be readjusted the following pay period.

We will continue to be available by phone and email for any questions and concerns of our students at 580.654.6324 and highered@kiowatribe.org.



Amber Silverhorn-Wolfe

Kiowa Tribe

Higher Education Director