

## **ARPA-American Rescue Plan Act: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

**6/23/21**

The purpose of this document is to provide the most current information to the community. It is based on the most current information for the U.S. Department of the Treasury, which is being routinely updated. These FAQs will also be updated as Treasury provides additional information.

### **1. Where did this money come from?**

- The federal government issued this money to the Tribes as part of the American Rescue Plan Act Fiscal Recovery Fund in 2021, a \$1.9 trillion pandemic relief bill, Congress' fifth significant covid-19 relief legislation package. The U.S. Department of the Treasury manages this program and has established and continues to establish new requirements for these monies. Treasury's efforts are focused on long-term (five-year) planning to ensure the highest and best uses of the monies.

### **2. How much money have the Tribes received from the federal government so far?**

- On June 1, 2021 the Tribes received a direct allocation of \$40,323,991 from the ARPA Fiscal Recovery Fund ("FRF") pursuant to the allocation methodology established by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. That amount was based on certified Tribal enrollment. The Tribes anticipate receiving a second allocation, based on total Tribal / Tribal entity employees, in July 2021. Additionally, the Tribes are receiving other ARPA relief for specific programs, such as Housing.

### **3. Is there going to be individual relief offered to individual Tribal Members?**

- Treasury has imposed significant limitations on individual relief, requiring such relief to be proportionate to Federal and Tribal aid previously received (including the Federal stimulus payments and direct relief made available under the CARES Act) and mandating that any such relief be based on findings of specific individual need, and not one-size-fits all. Some other tribes have enacted per-capita relief with these monies and are now subject to ongoing Inspector General investigations and potential demand from Treasury to return the monies or seize other Federal dollars intended for the Tribes. The Council is considering how to best provide additional relief in compliance with the new Federal requirements. Treasury is providing guidance on an ongoing basis and it may take them several more months to fully explain their requirements. Treasury posts new guidance at least weekly.

### **4. What can the FRF money be used for?**

- There are 5 main categories that the Tribes can use the funds for: (1) public health expenditures; (2) address negative economic impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; (3) provide government services; (4) premium pay for essential workers; and (5) infrastructure. Within these eligible use categories, the Tribes have the flexibility to determine how best to use payments to meet the needs of the community.



This funding offers an opportunity to address systemic public health, infrastructure and economic challenges.

**5. When do the Tribes need to use this money?**

- The Tribes need to dedicate this money by December 31, 2024 and spend the money by December 31, 2026.

**6. What have the Tribes done so far with this money?**

- No monies have been allocated yet. The Tribes held a multi-day strategic planning session to first address how the Tribes will approach spending the funds. The result of the strategic planning session was the creation of a Steering Committee consisting of Tribal Council Members. Supporting the Steering Committee are five working groups that focus on the primary eligible use areas for this funding: (1) Public Health; (2) Infrastructure; (3) Government Services; (4) Policy; and (5) Economic Development.

**7. How are the working groups staffed?**

- The working groups are staffed with members of the Tribal community and Tribal employees identified by the Council.

**8. What are the goals of the working groups?**

- Responsiveness, transparency and accountability; to identify Tribal projects that can assist the community and that fit within the eligible funding uses in order to prioritize and maximize the monies' long-term positive impact for generations. This involves reviewing Tribal resources, needs and gaps. The working groups are cataloging eligible projects and making recommendations on how the Tribes can use the funding to address needs within the community, with focus on the needs of elders, youth, veterans and the homeless. Each working group will take its recommendations to the Steering Committee, which will review and consider the recommendations. Following that review, the Steering Committee will present project and use recommendations to the Tribal Council. The Tribal Council will review and approve or deny the recommended projects / uses of the funding.

**9. What other sources of money are available?**

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of Health and Human Services, Indian Health Service, Department of Treasury, Housing and Urban Development, and the Bureau of Indian Education (and many other Federal agencies) received funding to distribute to tribes under the American Rescue Plan Act. Each respective source of money can be used for different purposes including development of rural healthcare, childcare, housing, infrastructure, economic development, emergency assistance, broadband, public safety, water, education, and language preservation. Some of these sources are in the form of competitive grants.



The Tribes are closely tracking these different sources of money in order to try to bring as much pandemic relief as possible back to the community. The working groups will develop tables that set out these other monies received by the Tribes, programs and entities and the Council will post that information. This will take several more months to compile, as many Federal requirements are still being determined. Treasury prohibits use of the FRF monies for any matching purposes.

- These are diverse sources of monies. While some are geared toward tribal governments, some are not. Some go to individuals, ranchers or individual businesses. Some are subject-matter-specific, such as education. Others are competitive. The Steering Committee is working to establish technical assistance for individuals and individual businesses to guide the Tribal community to try to maximize relief dollars available in the community.
- The working groups continue to develop a master list of eligible projects and are working to make recommendations to the Council as to how to prioritize across programs and needs, expanding on work started by the Infrastructure Committee in March 2021. The total costs reflected on the master list exceed the scope of the relief dollars, but the master project list is an aspirational document that helps us track needs and gaps. This is why the working groups are focused on looking for additional funding to meet as many needs as possible.

#### **10. What input is the Tribal Council seeking from the community?**

- The Council will hold community outreach meetings at which the working groups will be available as subject matter experts to seek the views, opinions, and input of the community regarding community needs, resources, goals, and projects. The working groups want your input in how the Tribes can best spend the money to have the greatest impact on our community. They will establish a feedback email address and also provide other online and paper opportunities to provide input in addition to the upcoming community meetings.

#### **11. What is the goal of the Tribes for this funding?**

- The Tribes are working to identify the most acute needs of the community in order maximize the use of the funds to have a meaningful and effective impact over time. This funding offers a unique opportunity for the Tribes to develop projects that address the economic, social, healthcare, and infrastructure challenges that exist within our community. This is the most one-time funding tribes have ever received and the Tribes want to create lasting benefits for future generations.

The updated FAQs will be available on the FBIC Council webpage, FaceBook, District offices, stores, and other public venues such as the post office. Please send comments to [fbicarpa@ftbelknap.org](mailto:fbicarpa@ftbelknap.org). We look forward to all of your input.