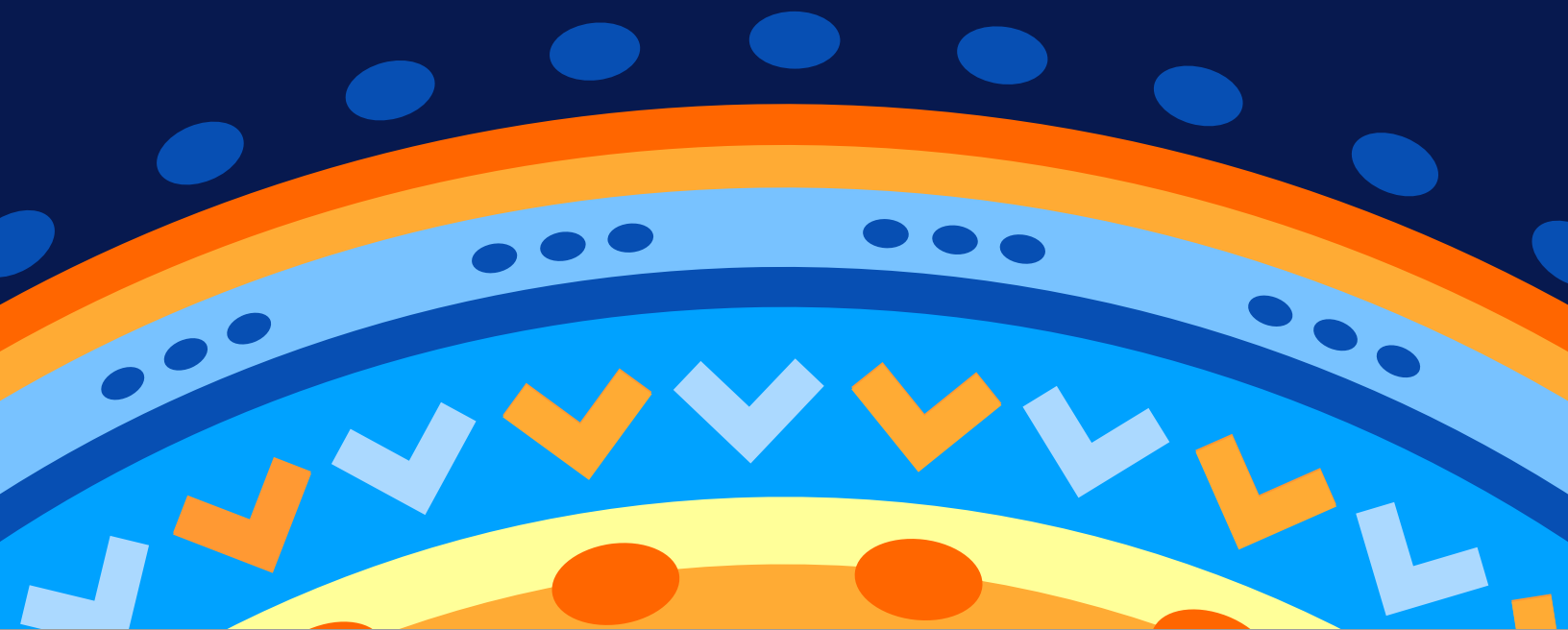




# TRIBAL RECOVERY REPORT

## American Rescue Plan Act

*Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds*





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# TRIBAL RECOVERY REPORT

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## **American Rescue Plan Act**

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## Overview

On March 11, 2021, President Joseph Robinette Biden Jr. signed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), a \$1.9 trillion pandemic recovery package to address the public health, economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. ARPA includes \$350 billion in financial assistance to state, local, and Tribal governments through the creation of the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) program for response to and recovery from the COVID-19 public health emergency. This historic fiscal relief, administered by the Office of Recovery Programs (ORP) within the U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury), set aside a \$20 billion allocation to Tribal governments – the largest single infusion of federal funding into Indian Country.<sup>1</sup> The SLFRF is one of seven critical recovery programs that the ORP oversees that are intended to assist Tribal governments, their communities, tribal citizen-owned businesses, and households with accessing relief. These programs include the SLFRF, the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, the Homeowner Assistance Fund, the State Small Business Credit Initiative, the Capital Projects Fund, the Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund, and the Coronavirus Relief Fund.

To support the implementation of these funds, Secretary of the Treasury Janet Louise Yellen created the ORP in April 2021, whose workforce included dedicated, diverse Native American policy and engagement staff with experience in Tribal policy, government, and economic development. In September 2022, Treasury created the Office of Tribal and Native Affairs – overseen by the Treasurer of the United States, Chief Lynn Malerba, the first Native American to hold this position. The Office’s purpose is to serve as a permanent hub for Tribal policy within Treasury.

This Tribal Recovery Report is authored by the Office of Tribal and Native Affairs within Treasury. It features innovative projects and services planned or underway by Tribal governments and funded by SLFRF to support the well-being of Tribal communities in equitable and culturally appropriate ways. To date, Tribal governments have planned or begun implementing over 3,000 projects and services with SLFRF to generate new economic opportunities and improve health, safety, and quality of life. Many Tribal SLFRF projects include partnerships and collaborations between multiple Tribes, local governments, non-profits, community members, and others to create sustainable and lasting change. The projects featured in the Tribal Recovery Report are among many that the individual Tribe has invested in with SLFRF. The efforts highlighted reveal the vast and impressive reach SLFRF has had as a catalyst for recovery.

1 For purposes of the SLFRF program, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) defined “Tribal government” as the recognized governing body of any Indian or Alaska Native tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village, community, component band, or component reservation, individually identified (including parenthetically) in the list published most recently as of the date of enactment of the ARPA pursuant to section 104 of the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994 (25 U.S.C. 5131). See section 602(g)(7) of the Social Security Act.

## Summary of Tribal Government SLFRF Data<sup>2 3</sup>

Total SLFRF Set Aside for Tribes	Tribes Awarded Funds	Tribal Members Impacted	Tribal Employees Reported
\$ 20,000,000,000	579	2,666,151	433,176

Many issues facing Tribal communities, whether healthcare, poverty, education, food security, social justice, or economic development – including tax parity – all have one element in common, inequitable access to resources. Across Indian Country, the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, regionally and locally, were not all the same. However, it did result in one commonality; the pandemic made pre-existing inequitable conditions even worse.

In recovery planning, Tribes displayed strength in self-determination and self-governance, assuming greater levels of decision-making and responsibility. Respecting Tribal sovereignty, Treasury recognized that pandemic responses funded by SLFRF could not follow a stringent linear course. Rather, to promote more equitable outcomes and a stronger economic recovery, Treasury looked for ways to support self-determination. In developing Tribal SLFRF policy, and in keeping with Executive Order 13175, President Biden’s Memorandum for Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships and Treasury’s Action Plan for Tribal Consultation and Collaboration, Treasury prioritized Tribal engagement and feedback. ORP hosted six Tribal consultations, held over 100 one-on-one sessions, and partnered with the White House Council on Native American Affairs and numerous Tribal national and regional organizations to provide direct engagement to maximize the impact of SLFRF funds and increase the likelihood of successful implementation.

Treasury listened to these concerns and recommendations from Tribal leaders and representatives and incorporated them into the development of the interim final rule and the final rule, resulting in increased flexibility in the use of funds. For example, the SLFRF final rule provided up to a \$10 million standard allowance for lost revenue, which dramatically simplifies the program, especially for smaller governments, whose total award may fall under \$10 million. Treasury also expanded eligible uses of funds for broadband infrastructure investments to address challenges with internet access, affordability, and reliability. The final rule also included additional eligible water and sewer infrastructure investments.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, Treasury reduced the reporting requirements to once-a-year<sup>5</sup> for Tribal governments that received smaller allocations and adopted an alternative<sup>6</sup> to the Single Audit to reduce administrative burdens where possible. These and other modifications provided flexibility so that each government has discretion on the best use of funds and has greater autonomy and responsibility in implementing recovery plans.

2 Data based on Project and Expenditure Reports submitted to Treasury for the reporting period ended June 30, 2022. The examples included throughout this Report are based on recipient reports, and their inclusion in this document does not constitute an explicit approval of these projects by Treasury.

3 Treasury used self-certified enrollment numbers provided by Tribes to the Bureau of Indian Affairs in April of 2021 and 2019 employment data in its methodology for allocating SLFRF to Tribal governments.

4 See The White House (May 2022) *Advancing Equity Through the American Rescue Plan*, pg. 114-115 for more information on SLFRF flexibilities provided in response to Tribal feedback:

5 Tribes that are allocated less than \$30 million in SLFRF are only required to submit a Project and Expenditure Report annually. Tribes that are allocated more than \$30 million in SLFRF are required to submit the Project and Expenditure Report quarterly.

6 Treasury recognized that due to the receipt of an SLFRF award, many SLFRF recipients may expend \$750,000 or more in Federal awards during their fiscal year and newly be required to complete a Single Audit or a Program-Specific Audit pursuant to 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F. These recipients may elect to undergo an Alternative Compliance Examination Engagement.

## Investing SLFRF to Address Inequities

Within the categories of eligible uses established by the American Rescue Plan Act and carefully implemented by Treasury, Tribal governments have broad flexibility to meet the needs of their people.

### SLFRF Eligible Uses:

- **Support the COVID-19 public health and economic response** by addressing COVID-19 and its impact on public health, as well as addressing economic harms to workers, households, small businesses, impacted industries, and the public sector;
- **Provide premium pay for essential workers**, offering additional support to those who have borne and will bear the greatest health risks because of their service in critical sectors;
- **Invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure**, making necessary investments to improve access to clean drinking water, support vital wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, and expand access to broadband internet; and
- **Replace lost revenue public sector revenue**<sup>7</sup>, which includes revenue of Tribal enterprises, using this funding to provide government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue experienced due to the pandemic.

#### Note:

The Tribal Recovery Report, focused on SLFRF, aims to help Tribal leaders protect, support, and lead their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic by sharing project examples. Common projects and services have been combined in universal Tribal government-centric themes. Therefore, the Report is stylized to align with the governance and departmental structure under which a Tribe operates. Because categories of common-themed eligible use projects are combined in this way, they do not necessarily align with the statutory use categories. For information about eligible uses and other program requirements, Tribal governments, as well as other recipients and stakeholders, should refer to the final rule<sup>8</sup> and other program guidance. Please contact Treasury's Office of Tribal and Native Affairs if you have questions about the data analysis.

The revenue loss eligible use category and its inclusion of revenue from Tribal enterprises in the definition of "general revenue" is of utmost importance to Tribes as economic development is crucial to funding government services. In general, Tribes lack parity with states and local governments due to their inability to levy property tax and income tax. As a result, Tribes rely on for-profit enterprises in lieu of a strong tax base to support public safety, road and infrastructure maintenance, housing, education, culture and health services, and other programs and projects that benefit the community. Enterprise closures caused significant deterioration to the Tribal economy, adding to pre-existing unmet needs.

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<sup>7</sup> The final rule allowed recipients to either calculate actual revenue loss or elect a standard allowance of up to \$10 million in aggregate, not to exceed their award amount, for government services. Tribes that were allocated under \$10 million are able to use their full award towards the government services eligible use.

<sup>8</sup> 87 Fed. Reg. 4338 (Jan. 27, 2022).

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR) 2003 report, *A Quiet Crisis*<sup>9</sup>, reported that the federal government's historic failure to carry out its promises and trust obligations has led to a longstanding and continuing disregard for Tribes' infrastructure, self-governance, housing, education, health, and economic development. In the USCCR's follow-up report, *Broken Promises*<sup>10</sup>, it was noted that despite the United States having treaty and trust obligations to provide quality healthcare for Native Americans, federal appropriations are not mandatory – unlike other federal healthcare programs. Against decades of underfunding of the trust responsibility,<sup>11</sup> the overarching challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the health and economic impacts in Tribal communities.

At the start of the pandemic, Native Americans faced higher poverty rates, overcrowding in homes, and a significant inequity in healthcare and health status compared to other Americans. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Native American life expectancy is 4.4 years less<sup>12</sup> than all other U.S. populations, and Native Americans have the highest COVID-19 mortality rates<sup>13</sup> nationwide, despite having only 1% of the population.<sup>14</sup>

Beyond healthcare, other determinants such as education, access to nutritious foods, criminal and social justice issues, and employment greatly contributed to inequities. As the pandemic began, the unemployment rate in the U.S. hit an unprecedented level at 14.8%<sup>15</sup>, while the Native American unemployment rate climbed to 28.6%<sup>16</sup> - with the closure of Tribal enterprises in gaming and hospitality being a leading factor. The financial viability of some of these enterprises was threatened, especially those that were already operating on small profits because of their intent<sup>17</sup> to provide governmental services and be job creators for the community.

The pandemic widened infrastructure inequities in tribal communities, from aging lead pipes and service lines to limited internet access. According to a recent Federal Communications Commission (FCC) report<sup>18</sup> more than 17% of Americans in rural areas and around 21% of residents on Tribal lands lack broadband access. This barrier drew attention to a systemic vulnerability to continue government operations and services to Tribal citizens in the face of major disruptions. The lack of connectivity, school closures, and overcrowded homes caused a ripple effect on education. In many communities, bus drivers and teachers in Tribal communities shifted gears to passing out and picking up meals and homework packets to enable instruction and ensure food security.

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9 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. (2003). *A Quiet Crisis: Federal Funding and Unmet Needs in Indian Country*.

10 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. (2004). *Broken Promises: Evaluating the Native American Health Care System*.

11 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. (2004). *Broken Promises: Evaluating the Native American Health Care System*.

12 Arias, E., (2021, November 9). *Mortality Profile of the Non-Hispanic American Indian or Alaska Native Population*. <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/110370>

13 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). *Distribution of COVID-19 Deaths and Populations, by Jurisdiction, Age, and Race and Hispanic Origin*. (NCHS/DVS) [Data set]. <https://data.cdc.gov/NCHS/Distribution-of-COVID-19-Deaths-and-Populations-by/jwta-jxhg>

14 Jones, N., Marks, R., Ramirez, R., Rios-Vargas, M., (2021) 2020 Census Illuminates Racial and Ethnic Composition of the Country.

15 Congressional Research Service. (2021, March 12). *Unemployment Rates During the COVID-19 Pandemic: In Brief*.

16 U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics. (2022). *Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey*. (LNU04035243) [Data set]. <https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LNU04035243>

17 GASB Codification 2600.116

18 FCC (2021, January 19). *Fourteenth Broadband Deployment Report*. <https://www.fcc.gov/reports-research/reports/broadband-progress-reports/fourteenth-broadband-deployment-report>.



While the SLFRF has granted Tribal governments a much-needed lifeline and an opportunity to adequately support the social and economic well-being of their people, the funds introduce additional considerations. Faced with an unprecedented influx of federal funding and flexible uses, Tribal governments must continue to determine how best to fill pre-existing gaps, invest in infrastructure, and address longstanding issues in Indian Country's history.

## Tribal Community Engagement and Promoting Equitable Outcomes

During consultation and other engagement sessions, Tribal leaders expressed the need to disburse the SLFRF quickly to enable community planning and to address the then rise of COVID-19 variant infections<sup>19</sup> and hospitalizations. In response to this feedback, Treasury swiftly executed agreements and provided one-on-one support to Tribes with a low-broadband capacity to lay the foundation for a strong and equitable recovery across Indian Country. Tribal governments are now one year into implementing SLFRF.<sup>20</sup> They have led the way this past year by addressing inequities, responding to immediate needs, and developing strategic plans supporting long-term visions for their people, land, and cultural resources to benefit Tribal citizens today and future generations.

These strategic plans, often based on a community needs approach, assisted Tribal leaders with prioritizing their operational, capital, and infrastructure objectives. Community engagement with Tribal citizens also fosters equity and inclusion, as all citizens could participate in creating a culture of shared problem-solving. Strategic plans based on community engagement also inform Tribal leaders of disparities and issues ranging from the long-term effects of COVID-19 on the elderly population to the gap in learning caused by pandemic-affected schooling to massive backlogs in Tribal courts. In finding common ground, Tribal leaders and citizens developed an informed consensus by spending plans that best respond to difficult problems. For example:

- The **Bois Forte Band of Chippewa** developed a strategic economic recovery plan using revenue replacement funds. The Plan is designed to improve the Tribe's ability to meet the community's needs and is centered around tribal citizen feedback. The framework will be used to strengthen workforce development, enhance employment opportunities, and create a comprehensive community development plan for all sectors of the reservation economy.
- The **Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana** formalized a COVID-19 Strategic Recovery Plan to equip the Tribe with evidence based on Tribal citizens and employee input. The Plan, administered via an assessment and interviews, will assist the Tribe in proactively developing, executing, and evaluating recovery programs using a data-driven approach.
- The **Omaha Tribe of Nebraska** engaged with a Tribal citizen earning a doctorate to administer a Community Needs Assessment and disseminate the project results. Surveys and interviews were conducted both in-person and over the internet to gain input on the impacts of the pandemic and overall priorities of the Tribe. The engagement data was then used to build a spending plan.

19 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021). *COVID-19 Data Tracker Weekly Review*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/covidview/index.html>

20 Tribal governments received a final payment based on employment starting in August 2021.

## Summary of General Eligible Use of SLFRF: Projects<sup>21</sup>

General Eligible Use Categories	Projects
Support Public Sector Capacity	987
Revenue Replacement	694
Support Public Health Expenditures	653
Administrative Support to Implement SLFRF	307
Infrastructure	208
Address Negative Economic Impacts	89
Premium Pay for Essential Workers	99
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,037</b>

### Making Services and Supports Available for Health and Recovery

Since the passage of the American Rescue Plan Act, Tribes across Indian Country have leveraged SLFRF to address health inequities and social determinants of health, reduce pre-pandemic health disparities, and looked to create a wide variety of programming to serve the most vulnerable populations. Tribal governments are investing in SLFRF to expand the system of care in Indian Health Service (IHS) and Tribally-owned healthcare facilities. Tribes addressed barriers to COVID-19 vaccinations by creating health campaigns and making vaccination sites accessible. Tribal leadership has taken different approaches to recruitment, retention, and employee engagement in healthcare by investing funds in housing and other amenities to attract and retain medical staff. Capital projects were not the only investment. A host of information technology improvements are being designed to support hospital and administration productivity and patient experience. Tribes have strengthened wrap-around services for mental health by funding treatments for substance misuse disorders and expanding access to telehealth treatments.



21. Data summarized represents data submitted by Tribal SLFRF recipients with the SLFRF expenditure categories. Treasury has not completed its review of submitted information, and any errors or inconsistencies in this dataset may be corrected in future reporting.

***Tribal Investments in Public Health and Recovery***<sup>22</sup>

Public Health and Recovery	Projects
COVID-19 Public Health Expenses	177
Other Public Health Services	164
COVID-19 Testing, Contact Tracing, and Vaccinations	106
Prevention in Congregate Settings (Nursing Homes, Prisons/Jails, Dense Work Sites, Schools, etc.)	76
Personal Protective Equipment	57
Medical Expenses	27
Mental Health Services	22
Substance Misuse Services	9
Medical Facilities	8
<b>Total Public Health and Recovery Projects</b>	<b>646</b>

- The **Assiniboine and Sioux Tribe of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation** have a long and honored tradition of military service. As part of the Tribe’s continuing commitment to veterans, SLFRF supports **transportation to veteran hospitals** for appointments, medical care, and preventative medicine. The Tribe will also assist veterans with COVID-19-related health issues.
- The **Catawba Indian Nation** will provide citizens access to dual-diagnosis programs to **address mental health and substance misuse**. To complete a holistic treatment approach, SLFRF will also provide funding for additional counseling services through a behavioral health specialist that will assist in crisis counseling and intensive outpatient treatment featuring cultural curriculum, cultural services, cultural activities, access to supportive housing, individual and family counseling, and medication-assistance treatment services.
- The **Hannahville Indian Community** is investing SLFRF in **parks and recreation infrastructure** to promote healthy families. Outdoor patio spacing in public buildings is also being constructed to create a safe environment for the community to convene.
- The **Fort Belknap Indian Community** is constructing the **Anaakyaaniin Wellness Center**, which will provide mental health treatment, substance misuse treatment, and other behavioral health services and support for vulnerable populations. The Center will also expand childhood health and welfare capacity and programming.

<sup>22</sup> Data has been aggregated into one or more categories.

- The **Ninilchik Village** will braid SLFRF with IHS funding to build a **primary care medical clinic** to serve the Homer, AK, community and establish a second clinic for the Anchor Point, AK community. Health and well-being are essential values to the Tribe –

*“The principles of health and good medicine provide a strong foundation for personal achievements, community success, and cultural enrichment.”*

- The **Seneca Nation of Indians** provides Emergency Management Services (EMS) and emergency medical and trauma care to the Nation and surrounding communities. The Tribe will invest SLFRF in several **EMS projects** to better respond to calls and provide an optimal patient care system.
- The **Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians**’ emergency services covers the reservation and surrounding community in rural California. SLFRF will support new capital equipment to ensure residents have access to vital emergency medical and fire services. Fire-based **emergency medical services** are typically first on the scene when paramedics are required.
- The **Standing Rock Sioux** are located in North Dakota, where the state has one of the country’s lowest vaccination rates<sup>23</sup> and continues to have a high transmission level of COVID-19. To incentivize its over 9,000 Tribal citizens to get fully vaccinated, the Tribe implemented a large-scale **vaccine incentive program**.
- The **Yakutat Tlingit Tribe** recognized that attracting qualified health professionals was an ongoing challenge due to a lack of housing options. The Tribe is dedicating funds to **building housing to recruit and retain highly trained medical professionals**.

## New Resources to Strengthen Tribal Government Services<sup>24</sup>

Central to any discussion on strengthening self-governance is the ability to fund government services. Tribal governments’ reliance on revenues derived from enterprises – many of which faced hardship during the pandemic – has made the ability of SLFRF to replace lost revenue critical in promoting recovery and delivery of government services.

Across Indian Country, Tribes seized the opportunity funded by SLFRF to strengthen government services, including operational improvements, justice-focused programming, and responding to the unique needs of their community. Public safety officers, first responders, frontline health workers, teachers, and other providers of vital services during the pandemic were financially recognized for keeping the community safe and running.

Tribes pursued various youth initiatives to address the learning crisis and transform education by giving Native children and young people equal access to quality learning. COVID-19 had a devastating

<sup>23</sup> Gilligan, C., (2022, August 10). *States With the Worst COVID-19 Vaccination Rates*. <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/articles/these-states-have-the-lowest-covid-19-vaccination-rates>

<sup>24</sup> As noted above, this Report is stylized to align with the governance and departmental structure under which a Tribe operates, and because categories of common-themed eligible use projects are combined in this way, they do not necessarily align with statutory use categories. When this section refers to "Tribal government services," it refers to services that Tribal governments traditionally provide, which overlap with other SLFRF-eligible use categories. Data has been aggregated into one or more categories.

impact on knowledge keepers, Native language speakers, and the elder population. Tribes committed SLFRF for language revitalization programs and online inter-generational activities with elders. These government program innovations underscore the ability of Tribes to implement SLFRF in adaptable and creative ways.

***Tribal Investments in Government Services***

<b>Government Services</b>	<b>Projects</b>
Provision of Government Services	691
Public Sector Workforce, Premium Pay, and Admin Costs	479
Household Assistance Programs	442
Healthy Childhood Programs, Education, and Services for Foster Care	73
Community Health, Safety, and Violence Interventions	43
Unemployment Benefits and Services	26
Transfers to Other Units of Government	15
Survivors Benefits	8
Non-Federal Match for Other Federal Programs	3
<b>Total Government Services Projects</b>	<b>1,780</b>

- The **Cherokee Nation** is committing funds for **direct reentry services** to justice-involved Cherokee citizens. Programs will provide professional and educational opportunities, including vocational training to remove barriers to employment. The program will also aid in locating affordable housing and promote collaboration between reentry service providers.
- The **Miami Tribe of Oklahoma** is dedicated to the perpetuation of Myaamia heritage through sharing inherent knowledge of the Miami Tribe’s unique history, language, and culture with all Myaamia citizens. SLFRF has facilitated **remote learning** through Tribal programs designed to enhance social, emotional, and mental health through a web-based portal accessible to Tribal citizens. Funding is also used to support a two-location project providing community members access to healthy foods, related food knowledge, and heritage-specific outdoor, socially distanced activities.
- The **Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake** implemented programming and assistance to families by providing homes for Tribal children in **emergency foster care and planned placements**.
- The **Jemez Pueblo** is supporting a Realty Office to preserve and protect the **cultural and traditional uses of lands** within the Tribe. The Realty Office will expand the current offerings of implementing land surveys, improving the GIS program, providing residential and mineral leases, and Right of Way. The department has increased work due to infrastructure and construction projects supported by SLFRF and other funds.

- The **Ketchikan Indian Community** provided **premium pay** to over 190 essential workers with added health risks. Additional pay was awarded in recognition of workers' resilience, dedication, and dependability, as well as to bolster efforts to retain and support staff.
- The **Native Village of Deering** and other local governments pooled SLFRF to develop **education-related wellness and nutrition** strategies. Children can attend quality preschool, and all ages of students in the area have access to nutritionally balanced free meals and can get "seconds."
- The **Nooksack Indian Tribe** is investing funds in an **after-school facility** designed to empower Tribal youth to excel in school and lead healthy, productive lives. The facility will provide a space for a safe and culturally-relevant enrichment program, including behavioral health services for children aged 5-18.
- The **Oscarville Traditional Council** is isolated for nearly four months of the year when the ice on the river makes traveling by snowmobile in the winter and boat in the spring dangerous. The Tribe utilized SLFRF to ensure citizens had time to prepare and gather **cleaning supplies, PPE, and nutritious food**.
- The **Penobscot Nation** courts system was upended due to pandemic-related closures. The Tribal courts were closed, proceedings were halted, and cases were at a standstill. The Tribe is investing SLFRF to **conduct remote hearings** to address case backlogs and keep current cases moving.
- The **Pueblo of Zuni** reservation is cold and snowy during the winter months. The Pueblo is implementing a **large-scale firewood program**. Firewood is a culturally relevant and renewable source for both heating and cooking. The use of firewood is also used in the practice of the Zuni traditional ceremonies. The program will ensure homes are heated and create jobs for the community.
- The **Pit River Tribe** is investing in **cultural information officers** to implement a comprehensive program for all ages. The native language reached a critical point during the pandemic where investing funds in language preservation and cultural revitalization programs was a priority to keep it alive. With revenue replacement funds, the Tribe hosted gatherings for basket weaving, language, and beading and involved all citizens in an ancestral run from culturally significant Mount Lassen to Mount Shasta.
- The **Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa** will use funds to operate a **warming center**. Many of the homeless population on the reservation lack a safe environment to sleep overnight, especially in the winter months, when the average temperature is 10°F. The Tribe will also invest in other interventions to tackle the longer-term housing needs of the unhoused population.
- The **Samish Indian Nation** is creating **unique educational opportunities** for all ages and stages. SLFRF will provide back-to-school supplies, tutoring support for school-age students, and higher education assistance to create pathways to good jobs.
- The **San Carlos Apache** is investing in the **local radio station**, KYAY. Community radio plays a central role in remote areas. The station provides public services announcements, discussions on community events, health and safety updates, and information from Tribal leadership.

## Advancing Tribal Infrastructure and Affordable Housing

The pandemic dramatically underscored the intersection between infrastructure and healthcare. Reliable water, sewer, broadband, electricity, and safe roads proved to be the backbone for an equitable recovery and a sustainable and resilient Tribal economy. Tribes are investing SLFRF to find long-term, dependable solutions to inadequate infrastructure. SLFRF also provides an opportunity to become more intentional in land use decisions and find solutions for a stable, quality, and affordable housing shortage. In the years ahead, investments in infrastructure will continue to generate significant benefits to Tribal sovereignty.

### *Tribal Investments in Water, Sewer, Broadband, and Housing*<sup>25</sup>

Tribal Infrastructure and Affordable Housing	Projects
Affordable Housing: Construction and Rehab Projects	136
Clean Water Projects	66
Drinking Water Projects	66
Broadband Projects	43
Water and Sewer Projects	33
<b>Total Tribal Infrastructure and Affordable Projects</b>	<b>344</b>

- The **Eastern Shoshone Tribe** averages 54 inches of snow each year and sits on the Wind River Indian Reservation, containing over 2.2 million acres. SLFRF will fund **rehabilitation and weatherization for senior homes** often located in isolated areas. Weatherization improvements are long-lived and will add substantial savings on annual energy bills.
- The **Karuk Tribe** experienced a fire that raged through the ancestral heart of the Tribe in the Klamath Mountains. The wildfire burned over 200 homes causing a rapid increase in homelessness. The Tribe is **investing in permanent housing** and purchased temporary travel trailers, including handicap-accessible options, to meet the needs of families.
- The **Knik Tribe** will build 32 **affordable homes for the elder population**. The homes incorporate accessibility floorplans and important age-in-place features that will support independence.
- The **Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin** is implementing a **tiny home project** for low-income elders, tribal citizens in transitional living situations, or those facing homelessness. With rising housing costs, the Tribe saw tiny homes as a solution to get people into homes safely, especially during the winter.

<sup>25</sup> Data has been aggregated into one or more categories.

- The **Native Village of Unalakleet** is situated in rural northwestern Alaska, where they practice a traditional Unaligmiut Eskimo subsistence lifestyle. Building off the Tribe’s mission to “*strengthen and preserve the social, economic, educational and cultural needs of the Native people of Unalakleet;*” SLFRF is funding a significant **broadband** project to provide internet access to all community members and improve the Tribe’s operations.
- The **Ohkay Owingeh** committed SLFRF for **two major wastewater projects** to address deteriorating pipes and corrosion of the current treatment facility. The failure of the existing plant would likely cause 175,000 gallons of raw sewage and untreated runoff to spill, which could result in catastrophic flooding and a severe health hazard.
- The **Osage Nation** is implementing a substantial **broadband** project within and between its three main communities of Grayhorse, Hominy, and Pawhuska. Internet network expansion will assist in telehealth, distance learning opportunities, affordable internet service, economic growth, and digital inclusion efforts where demands for internet access have grown due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The **Seneca-Cayuga Nation** is upgrading antiquated technology systems within its **water and wastewater treatment plant**. The system updates include cybersecurity and hardware and software to ensure pumps, motors, and other equipment run effectively and efficiently.
- The **Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians** is located in a high-risk area for wildfires. During high winds, power is often shut off in the community. To ensure the health and safety of Tribal citizens with electricity-dependent medical devices, SLFRF revenue replacement funds are providing reliable and alternate means to power through **standby generators** fueled by propane.
- The **White Mountain Apache Tribe** is taking proactive measures to ensure continued **access to clean water** for drinking and handwashing. The Tribe is investing funds to ensure all residents within the boundaries of the historic Fort Apache Indian Reservation have reliable water infrastructure.

## Recovering the Tribal Economy<sup>26</sup>

Health, education, public safety, environmental quality, and business development are interconnected, and investment in these areas in Indian Country promotes a cycle of social and economic prosperity.<sup>27</sup> As a cornerstone for recovering the Tribal economy, Tribes took a comprehensive approach to analyze revenue sources and economic development in response to the pandemic. Many examined Tribal government revenue systems and looked at approaches to align with modern economic realities through diversification opportunities.

Tribes developed innovative small business support programs, developed workforce training projects, and developed youth education programs. To assist Tribal citizens struggling with unemployment,

<sup>26</sup> Data has been aggregated into one or more categories.

<sup>27</sup> U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. (2004). *Broken Promises: Evaluating the Native American Health Care System*.



lost income, and COVID-19-related medical bills, debt-relief programs were enacted. Tribes also implemented childcare programs to provide a more affordable and equitable system and to support workforce participation.

### ***Tribal Investments in the Tribal Economy***

<b>Recovering the Tribal Economy</b>	<b>Projects</b>
COVID-19 Assistance to Small Businesses, Non-Profits, and Other Impacted Industries, including Loans and Grants to Mitigate Financial Hardship	179
Aid to Tourism Travel, Hospitality and Other Impacted Industries	49
Technical Assistance, Counseling, and Other Support for Business Incubators, Microbusinesses, and Start-Up or Expansion Assistance	24
Rehabilitation of Commercial Properties	15
<b>Total Recovering the Tribal Economy Projects</b>	<b>267</b>

- The **Blackfeet Nation** utilized SLFRF to host an **agricultural summit** for Tribal citizen-owned farms and producers. A combination of market conditions, severe weather, and the pandemic hit farm families hard. The summit provided education on services and federal programs to assist in economic recovery.
- The **Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation** is implementing a **driver’s license program** utilizing revenue replacement funds. As states have reduced funding for driver’s education and reinstatement programs, participation has declined. The Tribe recognized that having a driver’s license makes a job seeker more employable and that having a Tribal government-led program makes obtaining a driver’s license more accessible.
- The **Douglas Indian Association** developed a **Tribal Fisherman Grant** to assist small business owners who have maintained a historic Tribal presence in the commercial fishing and seafood industry. Demand for fresh seafood plummeted as restaurants, hotels, and catering businesses shuttered during the pandemic. The grants intend to offset the escalating fuel costs, transportation restrictions, and a decrease in salmon catches to help Tribal citizens economically recover.
- The **Hoh Indian Tribe** created a hardship assistance program that helps pay **medical bills in collections** and other COVID-19-related expenditures to lift citizens with debt-relief needs.
- The **Lovelock Paiute Tribe** is assisting working parents with long-term solutions for **childcare**. The pandemic reduced childcare in an area that already had an ongoing lack of options. The Tribe is constructing both a daycare and a Head Start to assist families and provide comprehensive early childhood education.

- The **Mescalero Apache Tribe** is aligning staffing needs with skills required to fill these critical positions. The Tribe is implementing a **workforce development program** focusing on vocational education. The program will provide scholarships to citizens and current employees to obtain certificates and further education in welding, carpentry, plumbing, electrical, and more – all critical and in-demand jobs to carry out the Tribe’s COVID-19 recovery plan.
- The **Pawnee Nation** recognized that childcare workers are vital to families and face an additional risk of COVID-19 spread. SLFRF was used to provide **premium pay** wages to essential childcare workers and after-school program teachers.
- The **Spirit Lake Tribe** acknowledged that Tribal citizen-owned ranching businesses had been severely impacted since the pandemic’s start. The closures, combined with a historical drought, have made ranching a challenge. To assist in recovery, the Tribe enacted a **small business grant program** that provides hay and economic support.
- The **Walker River Paiute** is located in a food desert in rural Nevada, where the economy was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Tribe is constructing the largest **food pantry** in the state to address food insecurity for not only Tribal citizens but neighboring communities in need. The food pantry was built with a comprehensive look at nutrition – from a mobile harvest program to a senior produce program to a kid’s café where a nutritionist teaches cooking classes with traditional foods.

## Conclusion

The impact of SLFRF in helping Tribal communities design and carry out a recovery plan is apparent across Indian Country. Guided by regional priorities and objectives, the funding is providing ways to address a combination of long-term and short-term improvements to communities, support recovering the Tribal economy, save and create jobs, and is resulting in new ways of delivering government programs.

Tribes are now in an implementation phase. Leaders will need to evaluate risk in meeting project timelines due to potential supply chain disruptions and limited staffing to handle a higher volume of work. Carrying out programming and construction requires a system of people, processes, and technology working together daily. While the pandemic disrupted traditional work systems and created challenges, a collaboration between Tribes, local governments, non-profits, and others has allowed Tribes to be innovative in implementation, despite being understaffed.

Treasury will continue to engage with Tribal leaders and staff on compliance, training of recipient reporting, and discussions on careful stewardship in carrying out the grant.

## About the Office of Tribal and Native Affairs

The Office of Tribal and Native Affairs is committed to working with Tribal governments and Indigenous communities to promote economic prosperity. The Office is overseen by the Treasurer of the United States, Chief Lynn Malerba, the first Native American to hold this position. The Office was established in September of 2022 by Treasury to serve as a hub for Tribal policy and is part of the efforts to develop the Department's growing relationship with Tribal nations. The Office works across programs to assist in implementing economic relief and recovery programs for Tribal communities. The staff has hosted 28 consultations, over 200 information sessions, one-on-one discussions, and training sessions to support an equitable and swift recovery from the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.



