

Tribes submit enrollment data for American Rescue Plan funds

By Dean Rhodes

Smoke Signals editor

Native American Tribes had until Monday, April 12, to submit enrollment data to the U.S. Department of the Interior to help it figure out funding allocations under the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan signed into law by President Joe Biden on March 12, 2021.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs reached out to all federally recognized Tribes seeking the data following three Tribal consultations held in late March.

Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez confirmed that the Grand Ronde Tribe met the deadline to submit enrollment data.

"We provided our information last week," she said.

The Grand Ronde Tribe participated in a Treasury Department Tribal consultation regarding distribution of the funds on Thursday, April 1, according to agendas distributed by the Tribal government.

The American Rescue Plan will invest more than \$31 billion in Indian Country with the Bureau of Indian Affairs charged with distributing \$900 million to Tribal governments through its programs.

"Enrollment data is needed to equitably and transparently allocate funding to Tribes for Tribal governmental services and is also an important source of information for supporting equitable distribution of resources by Indian Affairs and other federal agencies," states a BIA press release.

The BIA funding includes \$772.5 million for Tribal government services, public safety and justice, social services, Indian child welfare and related expenses. It also includes \$20 million for delivery of potable water and \$100 million for housing improvements. In addition, there is another \$850 million available for the Bureau of Indian Education's 183 K-12 schools.

Additional American Rescue Plan funding for Indian Country includes \$20 billion for Tribal governments to combat COVID-19 and stabilize safety-net programs, \$6 billion for the Indian Health Service, \$1.248 billion for Housing & Urban Development Tribal housing programs and \$20 million to mitigate the effect of the pandemic on Native languages.

The Trump administration received criticism in 2020 for not using Tribal enrollment data when it distributed Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act funding to Tribes nationwide.

Despite requesting enrollment numbers, the federal government instead used outdated federal housing program population data to distribute the first portion of the \$8 billion allocated to Native American Tribes.

This led to all nine Oregon Tribes benefitting from Treasury's allocation formula while some Tribes, such as the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, lost hundreds of millions of dollars in funding.

The Grand Ronde Tribe received more than \$45 million in CARES Act funding and used a considerable portion of it to fund the Coronavirus Relief Payment Program that sent adult Tribal members \$4,400 in a combined eight payments during 2020 to help offset the economic hardships caused by the pandemic. The Tribe is still using the 2020 funding, allocating a portion of it to pay for another full-time officer with the Grand Ronde Tribal Police Department. The deadline for Tribes to spend CARES Act funding was extended a year until the end of 2021.

The 2,946-member Spokane Tribe of Indians in Washington state recently announced in a special edition of its *Rawhide Press* newspaper that it is assuming an allocation of between \$50 million and \$75 million and that it will distribute 20 percent of whatever amount is received directly to Tribal members in four quarterly payments.

"While the legislation allows for support to households, the regulations governing how funds can be spent have not been published," the Spokane Tribe said. "And the U.S. Treasury has not decided on the formula by which they will allocate funds. ... This wide range of possibilities reflects the uncertainty surrounding the formula Treasury will use."

The Spokane Tribe also announced that it would use American Rescue Plan funding to develop a wood/hemp pellet enterprise and meat distribution program, support food sovereignty programs and work with its housing authority to expand housing options for Tribal members.

Hernandez said the Grand Ronde Tribe is waiting to see the federal guidance and regulations regarding use of American Rescue Plan funds before making any decisions on how to allocate it. She added that the Tribe does not have an estimate of how much funding it expects to receive from the federal government. ■

Youth Council applicants sought

The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon is seeking applicants, grades six through 12, who are interested in serving on the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde's Youth Council.

Youth who are enrolled members of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, direct descendants of a currently enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, or an enrolled member of another federally recognized Native American Tribe receiving services directly from the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde are eligible to apply.

The Youth Council acts in an advisory capacity to Tribal Council, the Youth Education Department, Youth Empowerment & Prevention as well as other Tribal departments and programs in identifying needs and developing priorities concerning Tribal youth and youth-related programs and activities.

The Youth Council will consist of nine (9) voting members appointed by Youth Council advisors. Youth Council members must be currently registered in school and in grades six through 12 at an educational facility. In selecting members of the Youth Council, Youth Council advisors shall give preference to persons who:

1. Have maintained good academic standing by carrying a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA on a 4.0 grading scale.
2. Maintain healthy life choices.
3. Demonstrated leadership skills.
4. Are able to commit to attend meetings and Youth Council activities twice a month in Grand Ronde, and trainings and other activities as needed. Also able to travel when needed.

Youth Council advisors will likely be selecting applicants for interviews by May 15, 2021. All interested youth are encouraged to fill out an application and submit the application by e-mail to; yep@grandronde.org or by mail to:

CTGR Youth Council advisors
Attention: Youth Council advisors
9615 Grand Ronde Road
Grand Ronde, OR 97347

If you have any questions, please contact either Shannon Stanton at 503-879-1489, Vincent Chargualaf at 503-879-1479 or Angey Rideout at 503-879-4533, or by e-mail at yep@grandronde.org

Sincerely,
Shannon Stanton
Vincent Chargualaf
Angey Rideout
Youth Council advisors



Youth Council
APPLY FOR
YOUTH COUNCIL

Deadline to apply is May 15th | Applications available on YEP FB
MORE INFO on YEP FB or IG | Must be in grades 6 through 12

 Grand Ronde Youth Empowerment & Prevention
 [ctgyouthempowerment](https://www.instagram.com/ctgyouthempowerment)  503.879.2034

Health & Wellness Center entrance

Reminder: The drive-through entrance at the Health & Wellness Center is for loading and unloading only. The entrance was built with our Elders and those with mobility issues and their ease of access in mind.

If you are coming to the center to pick up prescriptions, please park in one of our regular parking spaces.

Thank you,
Grand Ronde Health & Wellness Center Administration