AFN Navigator Program

A Statewide Success Story
In June 2021, the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) launched a COVID-19 Navigator Program to:
(i) assist the Alaska Native community in capturing federal pandemic relief aimed at Native American recovery; and to (ii) prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 among Alaska Natives and throughout rural Alaska.

The initial six-months of the program, made possible through a grant from the State of Alaska, was an overwhelming success. AFN secured at least $78 million in Federal resources for Alaska Natives entities – and we expect this number to increase exponentially as awards are announced by Federal agencies over the coming months.

In January, AFN received additional funding to extend the Navigator Program through September 30, 2022.
Under our COVID-19 Navigator Program, AFN functions as the “hub” in the center of the network, while the individuals and organizations we contract and collaborate with function as the “spokes” to deploy our uniform messaging and strategy.

The Program couples ‘Navigators’ with Alaska’s 12 geographic Native regions—to better enable isolated rural Native villages and undercapitalized tribes and tribal organizations compete for COVID-19 resources.

Navigators include former:
- U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee professional staff;
- U.S. Senate Commerce Committee professional staff;
- Alaska Native corporation executives and attorneys; and
- State of Alaska employees
Targeted Assistance

Regional Navigators

Grant-Writing Assistance

Consortia Applications

Workshops, Trainings and Weekly Newsletters

Reporting and Compliance Assistance

Funding Database

Funding Summaries
Available Resources

Awareness about a particular federal COVID-19 funding opportunity is nice.

Access is necessary.

The Navigator Program focuses on the latter.
Available Resources

Current Funding Opportunities

AFN is committed to ensuring the Alaska Native community is supported and informed of federal COVID-19 relief programs aimed at Native American recovery and accessing those programs.

The opportunities below are sortable by relevant attributes (like category, agency, and deadline) and are color coded by level of effort needed to apply (green for low effort, yellow for medium effort, and red for high level of effort to apply).
Available Resources

Grant-Writing Assistance

The Alaska Municipal League (AML) provides additional resources (including grant writing pool to assist with grant applications), fund tracking, and tools (including loss revenue calculator).

The AFN and AML have collaborated to offer a FREE pre-grant application consultation for tribal governments to talk through their interest, eligibility, and processes for upcoming funding opportunities with an experienced grant writer. Tribal governments that have identified a grant that they believe fits a need, should follow the intake process.

Workshops & Training

AFN has held a number of virtual workshops, all of which are archived, to help Alaska Native entities and organizations learn about COVID-19 funding opportunities, apply for those opportunities (i.e., grant writing), utilize recovery funds (e.g., examples of uses of funds), comply with reporting requirements, and more. Interested persons can sign up to attend a virtual session or they can review past events by visiting the ‘Navigator Program’ link off of AFN’s website.

More Information

https://www.nativefederation.org/navigator-program-workshops-trainings/

Email: navigator@nativefederation.org

Contact

Alaska Municipal League
907-790-5304
dawn@akml.org
ARPA Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery (CSLFRF) Funds Reporting Annual Deadline: April 30, 2022

Upcoming Webinars: How to Complete the ARPA-State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Compliance Reporting: Preparing for the April 30th ARPA Reporting Deadline

Thursday, April 14th
Time: 10:00 - 11:00 am (AKST)
Hosted by U.S. Treasury Department

Thursday, April 21st
Time: 1:00 - 2:00 pm (AKST)
Hosted by AFN and AML

www.nativefederation.org/navigator-program-workshops-trainings/

Reporting Resources
E-mail: SLFRP@Treasury.gov
CARES Act Funds Quarterly Reporting Deadline: April 11, 2022
Cycle 8 (January 1 – March 31, 2022)

- Alaska Municipal League free reporting assistance through April 30, 2022
- Recorded Webinars on Navigator Trainings and Workshop webpage
- Treasury Videos and Training Guides:
  - 3/22/2021 Updated Recipient Desk Review Procedures
  - 3/2/2021 Frequently Asked Questions
  - 11/30/2020 Portal Upload Template
  - 9/1/2020 Training Slide Deck

- Treasury office hours: Monday – Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm (EDT)
  - Email: CARES@oig.treas.gov
  - Phone: 1-855-584-4853
Navigators track federal COVID-19 funding opportunities on a daily basis.

Once a program is identified, eligibility is determined, outreach is performed, and a funding summary is prepared. Sometimes advocacy is required to ensure the program works for Alaska.

If appropriate, AFN will submit an application for a consortia.

- U.S. Department of Treasury
- U.S. Department of Commerce
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- National Telecommunication and Information Agency
- Federal Communication Commission
Treasury - Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

AFN participated in five consultations with Treasury and provided written comments to proposed program. AFN proposed an alternative formula for the employment allocation portion of these funds to give Alaska tribes ‘credit’ for their affiliated regional tribal organization employees. Treasury agreed to the change and proposed a $1 million minimum for all Alaska Native and American Indian tribes.

This formula change meant that Alaska received a minimum of $1 million for each of its 229 tribes—or $229 million.

Shortly before the application period ended, AFN learned that 78 Alaska tribes had not applied for the program and thus the state would not receive $78 million.

Navigators worked to get all of Alaska’s 229 tribes signed up for the program, ensuring that Alaska received its full allocation. Without AFN, 78 Alaska tribes would not have received their $1 million employment allocation, and the remaining Alaska tribes would have received a token amount because the original formula heavily favored American Indian tribes.

NTIA - Tribal Broadband and Connectivity Program

AFN worked with the Alaska Telephone Association, Denali Commission, and Alaska Tribal Administrators Association, as well as telecommunications providers to educate tribes about the program.

Navigators contacted every tribe to ensure it submitted its own application or was part of a consortium.

AFN conducted several briefing sessions and workshops in partnership with NTIA.

AFN formed a ‘Broadband Use and Adoption Consortium’ and submitted a $35 million application to provide computer hardware and software (including installation and maintenance), training, and Internet cafés, as well as broadband subsidies to consortia members.

AFN’s consortia is made up of 200 tribes and Native entities, including:

- 26 federally recognized tribes;
- 6 regional tribal organizations (serving 157 tribes);
- 4 Tribally Designated Housing Entities (serving 30 tribes); and
- 28 Alaska Native village corporations
Treasury - Emergency Rental Assistance

AFN Navigators assisted eligible tribes submit their applications for additional ERA funding to help tribal members pay rent, late mortgages, utilities, and insurance.

Direct outreach to 37 tribes and Tribally Designated Housing Authorities eligible to receive ERA funding.

Assistance with filling out applications on behalf of several remote tribes experiencing internet outages.

Treasury - Housing Assistance Fund

Treasury allocated $9.9 billion to the Homeowner Assistance Fund. $498 million set aside for Tribes or Tribally Designated Housing Entities.

AFN Navigators worked with the Association of Alaska Housing Authorities, which represents the 14 regional Tribally Designated Housing Entities, to ensure applications were submitted for the HAF.

Roughly 40 Alaska tribes submitted ‘Notices of Intent’ to preserve their funding allocation.

Treasury - Capital Projects Fund

The Treasury Department will allocate $100 million to Indian tribes for capital construction projects, including broadband, water and sewer, and community facilities, among others.

AFN Navigators are working with Alaska tribes to help them apply for this program. Each tribe is eligible to receive $167,000 for capital construction projects.

AFN Navigators participated in tribal consultations and recommended that priority be given to tribes designated as “small and needy” by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Alaska has the most SNTs in the nation. Treasury will be holding additional consultation sessions with tribes, including AFN, as it develops the funding formula which should favor Alaska tribes.
Navigators performed extensive outreach to the University of Alaska, Ilasagvik Tribal College, and Alaska Pacific University.

As a result, the University of Alaska applied for a $3 million grant to serve Native college students by providing computers and computer literacy training, reduced cost broadband connections, and upgrades to computer labs and equipment at rural campuses.

FCC - Emergency Broadband Benefit

EBP provides a discount of $75 per month for broadband bills for persons living on tribal lands – including all of Alaska. Eligible households can also receive $100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from their broadband provider.

According to White House estimates, 200,000 Alaska residents across the state are eligible for reduced broadband rates because they meet the income thresholds. Yet, only 5,000 of these Alaskans are signed up for the program. AFN is working to close that gap.

AFN Navigators met with the Chief of Staff of the incoming FCC Chair Jessica Rosenworcel on the lack of outreach to Native communities. The Chairman’s office agreed to work with AFN to improve the outreach and get all eligible Alaskans signed up for this $7 billion program.
General Questions:
Navigator@nativefederation.org

https://www.nativefederation.org/afn-navigator-program/