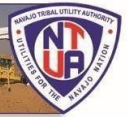


# Meeting the Needs of the Navajo Nation



NTUA Update of Navajo Nation Fiscal Recovery Funds (NNFRF)  
American Rescue Plan Act 2021 & Refunded Defunded CARES Act Projects

## NTUA NNFRF Project Update #8 - Status of Utility Projects as of July 7, 2022

This report highlights the progress of the Refunded Defunded Navajo Nation CARES Act Projects. These multi-utility projects were initially funded under the Navajo Nation CARES Act Fund but were later defunded as the Navajo Nation's deadline for the completion of these projects neared, prompting the Navajo Nation to recall the funds and reallocate the unspent funds to the Navajo Nation Hardship Assistance Expenditure Plan. The Navajo Nation has since refunded these projects, as described below.

**HISTORY:** On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) was signed into law. ARPA's Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund and the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (Fiscal Recovery Funds) are intended to build on and expand the relief provided in the 2020 CARES Act.

The funds are intended to support governmental efforts to mitigate and contain the spread of COVID-19, as well as respond to the health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19 suffered by residents and businesses. Among other things, funding is intended to build and strengthen infrastructure, such as water, wastewater, and broadband utilities in unserved and underserved communities.

### **NNFRF OFFICE ESTABLISHED:**

On July 23, 2021, the Navajo Nation Council (NNC) passed Resolution No. CJY-41-21, which was signed by Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez into law on August 2, 2021. Resolution CJY-41-21 refunded projects that were defunded under the Navajo CARES Act resolution.

The Navajo Nation Council Budget and Finance Committee issued Resolution No. BFS-31-21 on September 1, 2021, creating an application and review process, including the requirements for applicants to submit expenditure plans requiring all projects to fall into one of eighty-three expenditure categories, as defined by the U.S. Department of Treasury.

### **NTUA SUBMITS PROPOSALS:**

On September 9, 2021, NTUA submitted project descriptions and expenditure plans for all its Defunded Navajo Nation CARES Act Projects to the Navajo Nation Department of Justice (DOJ). These projects address local needs for broadband connectivity, water, wastewater, electricity, education, and health and safety.

On September 28, 2021, the Navajo Nation DOJ found that all NTUA's Defunded Navajo Nation CARES Act Projects are eligible for NNFRF. However, the Navajo Nation informed NTUA that it was not expending NNFRF funds for electric grid reliability projects that are not directly necessary to construct water, wastewater, or broadband projects.



# NTUA NNFRF Project Utility Construction Update #8

## Data as of July 7, 2022

Multi-utility NTUA crews continue to work on projects released for construction for the Navajo families that have been waiting for life-essential utility services. NTUA teams are moving projects into the construction stage throughout the Navajo Nation, following the first disbursement of NNFRF funds on April 20, 2022.



NTUA appreciates the first disbursement of NNFRF funds. NTUA will comply with its obligations and will remain transparent regarding its expenditure toward completing the refunded Defunded Navajo Nation CARES Fund Projects by providing these periodic updates.

### 2.18 – HOUSING SUPPORT: OTHER HOUSING ASSISTANCE

The Navajo Nation approved NNFRF funding for NTUA’s Connecting Homes to Electricity/House Wiring Program. These projects will provide a power source for Navajo family homes on the Navajo Nation. There are two sections: NTUA electric connections and off-grid residential solar units.

#### **NTUA Electric Connections:**

With the funds designated for NTUA electric connections, NTUA estimates it can fund the extension of NTUA’s existing electric distribution lines to 404 Navajo family homes. This plan also includes funding, as needed, to complete interior house wiring, pole mounted meter loops, certification and recertification of house wiring, and inspections.

As of this Update, 320 Navajo homes are connected to the electric grid.

**Table 1: NTUA Electric Connections: Staging of 404 Homes**

NTUA Electric Connections Stage (404)		Status
1	Completed Applications	107
2	Projects that are in the Engineering Stage	19
3	Projects that are at the Right-of-Way Stage	303
4	Projects with Approved Right of Way	142
5	Projects that are in Construction	15
6	Projects that are Constructed and In Service	320
<b>Total</b>		<b>906</b>

**Table 1** above shows the various stages of completed electric service applications. Stages 1 through 4 are Completed applications that are under review, but some may never be constructed for a variety of reasons.

### **Off-Grid Residential Solar Units:**

With the funds designated for the off-grid residential solar projects, NTUA estimates it can fund connection of 150 off-grid solar systems and 425 electric grid connections to Navajo homes. The 150 off-grid residential solar systems comprise of a skid mounted solar unit, battery system, an energy efficient refrigerator. The funding will also cover, as needed, basic interior house wiring, certification and re-certification of house wiring, inspection, and a generator with an automatic transfer switch (if medically necessary). NTUA has selected Industrial Solar Consulting, out of Gilbert, AZ to manufacture the solar units.

**Table 2: Off-Grid Residential Solar Units: Staging of 150 Solar Projects**

Off-Grid Residential Solar Project Stage		Status
1	Completed Applications	0
2	Projects that are in the Engineering Stage	0
3	Projects that are Found to be Feasible	149
4	Projects that are in Construction	0
5	Projects that are Constructed and In Service	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>151</b>

**Table 2:** Once funds have been exhausted, remaining projects will be moved to a future funding source.

### **Off-Grid Residential Solar Units: Staging of 425 Homes Connected to Electric Grid**

The off-grid solar plan also includes funding to extend power from the existing distribution system to connect 425 Navajo family homes. This plan also includes funding, as needed, to complete the interior house wiring, pole mounted meter loops, certification and recertification of house wiring, and inspections.

Depending on the location of the homes to existing power lines, electric grid connections may be provided by NTUA or neighboring non-NTUA electric providers such as: Arizona Public Service (APS), Continental Divide Electric Cooperative (CDEC), the City of Farmington, the City of Gallup, Jemez Mountains Electric Cooperative (JMEC), or Socorro Electric.

**Table 3: Off-Grid Residential Solar Units: Staging of 425 Homes Connected to Electric Grid Defunded CARES Act (DCA) – Neighboring Utilities Connection Staging**

Electric Connections Stage (425)		Status
1	Completed Applications	78
2	Projects that are in the Engineering Stage	1
3	Projects that are at the Right-of-Way Stage	5
4	Projects with Approved Right of Way	9
5	Projects that are in Construction	22
6	Projects that are Constructed and In Service	46

**NTUA is working with APS, CDEC, and JMEC on several projects in each of their service territories to connect customers to the electric grid. See tables below.**

**Arizona Public Service Customers (APS)**

Project Stages		Total No. of Projects
1	Completed Applications	0
2	Projects that are in the Engineering Stage	1
3	Projects that are at the ROW Stage	3
4	Projects with Approved ROW	3
5	Projects that are in Construction	0
6	Projects that are Constructed and In Service	0
<b>Proposed DCA Neighboring Utility (APS) Projects</b>		<b>7</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>7</b>

**Continental Divide Electric Cooperative (CDEC) – New Mexico**

		Total No. of Projects
1	Completed Applications	0
2	Projects that are in the Engineering Stage	0
3	Projects that are at the ROW Stage	0
4	Projects with Approved ROW	0
5	Projects that are in Construction	12
6	Projects that are Constructed and In Service	32
<b>Proposed DCA Neighboring Utility (CDEC) Projects</b>		<b>44</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>44</b>

**Jemez Mountains Electric Cooperative (JMEC) – New Mexico**

		Total No. of Projects
1	Completed Applications	78
2	Projects that are in the Engineering Stage	0
3	Projects that are at the ROW Stage	2
4	Projects with Approved ROW	6
5	Projects that are in Construction	10
6	Projects that are Constructed and In Service	14
<b>Proposed DCA Neighboring Utility (JMEC) Projects</b>		<b>110</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>110</b>

## 5.2 – CLEAN WATER: CENTRALIZED WASTEWATER COLLECTION & CONVEYANCE

The Navajo Nation authorized NNFRF for NTUA’s refunded Defunded Navajo Nation CARES Act Projects related to wastewater collection systems. With this funding NTUA estimates it can complete 9 projects. The projects will include rehabilitation and/or upgrades for lift stations.

A lift station pumps wastewater from a lower elevation to higher elevation and allows the wastewater to flow into a lagoon or other wastewater treatment plants. NTUA has identified 6 lift stations in Arizona and 3 in New Mexico that may be funded from this expenditure category.

**Table 4: NTUA Centralized W/W Collection and Conveyance System Projects Stage**

Projects Stage		Status
1	Design and Engineering	5
2	Right of Way	0
3	In Procurement Process	3
4	Release Construction	1
5	Construction Complete and In Service	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>9</b>

**Table 4** provides a status update of the nine projects. NTUA will move forward with project development in design and engineering. To advance these projects to the construction phase, NTUA will need to receive funds from the NNFRF.

## 5.3 – CLEAN WATER: DECENTRALIZED WASTEWATER

The Navajo Nation authorized NNFRF for NTUA’s Defunded Navajo Nation CARES Act decentralized wastewater projects. With this funding, project projections indicate NTUA can complete (78) septic disposal system projects connected to homes located on the Navajo Nation that are located too far from a centralized wastewater collection system for economical connection.

These projects include the cost to construct a fully functioning septic system which includes a septic tank, a drain field, plumbing (if necessary), sink (if necessary), hot water heater system (if necessary), bathroom addition (if necessary), an energy efficient refrigerator, house wiring (if necessary), all required inspections, and the installation of any other necessary components for a functional system. For each septic system to properly operate, a power source is required.

Each project includes funding for either a solar system, connection to the electric grid or a small gas- powered electric generator. It should be noted that each project in this category has a companion project under expenditure category 5.15 which provides a water cistern system connection to the home.

NTUA will move forward with project engineering development. To advance these projects to the construction phase, NTUA will need to receive funds from the NNFRF. Once NTUA has exhausted all the funds in expenditure category 5.3, all remaining unfinished project will be eligible to be moved to a future funding source.

**Table 5: Septic Systems Referral Stage:** The table shows more projects being processed than the 78 that were funded. NTUA continues to leverage other funding sources to complete more projects. NTUA has received funding to complete 46 projects using Indian Community Development Block Grant funding. However, NTUA still needs to identify funding for the remaining projects.

Septic Systems Referral Stage		Referral Stage Status
1	IHS or NN Active Referrals	170
2	Referrals that are in the Engineering Stage	160
3	Referrals that were Found to be Infeasible	(186) Not included in total
4	Referrals pending a NN EPA Permit	59
5	Referrals that are in Construction	0
6	Referrals that are Constructed and In Service	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>392</b>

### **5.11 – DRINKING WATER: TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION**

The Navajo Nation approved for NTUA’s refunded Defunded Navajo Nation CARES Act drinking water transmission and distribution projects. With this funding NTUA estimates it can complete 16 transmission and distribution projects. This funding category provides funds to replace 7 compromised water distribution lines and 6 compromised Pressure Reducing Valves (PRV) and provides funds to upgrade existing electric distribution lines to provide power to 3 water transmission line projects.

**Table 6: Stage of NTUA Drinking Water: Transmission and Distribution Projects**

Stage of NTUA Drinking Water: Transmission and Distribution Projects		Status
1	Design and Engineering	1
2	Right-of-Way	1
3	In Procurement Process	4
4	Release Construction	2
5	Construction Complete and In-Service	8
<b>Total</b>		<b>16</b>

**Table 6:** Of these 16 projects, NTUA has completed the construction of 8 projects. There are 4 projects in active construction that will be completed.

### **5.14 DRINKING WATER STORAGE**

The Navajo Nation approved funds from the NNFRF for NTUA’s drinking water storage projects. With this funding NTUA estimates it can rehabilitate 2 existing NTUA water storage tanks. Water storage tanks serve as the main water supply for Navajo communities. It is important to keep water storage tanks maintained to provide safe and reliable drinking water for community members.

NTUA will move forward with project development. To advance these projects to the construction phase, NTUA will need to receive funding from the NNFRF. The two water storage tanks that serve the Gap/Bodaway and Dennehotso communities are in Arizona. NTUA has completed the rehabilitation of the water tanks and is requesting the Navajo Nation to rehabilitate two additional water storage tanks in Casamero Lake and Smith Lake, both are in New Mexico.

**5.14– DRINKING WATER: OTHER WATER INFRASTRUCTURE**

The Navajo Nation authorized NNFRF for NTUA’s water cistern systems. With this funding, project projections indicate NTUA can provide connections of 78 water cistern systems to homes located on the Navajo Nation. These 78 homes are located too far from a centralized water distribution system for economical connection. These projects include the cost to provide a fully functioning cistern system which includes a cistern tank, a pump, and plumbing (if necessary), all required inspections, and any other necessary components for a functional system. NTUA will move forward with project development. To advance these projects to the construction phase, NTUA will need to receive funds from the NNFRF.

**Table 7: Cistern Systems Referral Stage**

Cistern Systems Referral Stage		Referral Stage Status
1	IHS or NN Active Referrals	170
2	Referrals that are in the Engineering Stage	163
3	Referrals that were Found to be Infeasible	(186) (not included in total)
4	Referrals pending a NN EPA Permit	59
5	Referrals that are in Construction	0
6	Referrals that are Constructed and In Service	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>392</b>

**Table 7:** It should be noted that each project in this category has a companion project under expenditure category 5.3, which provides a septic system and connection to the home. Once NTUA has exhausted all the funds in expenditure category 5.15, all remaining unfinished projects will be eligible to be moved to a future funding source.

**5.19 BROADBAND – LAST MILE PROJECTS**

The Navajo Nation approved NNFRF for NTUA’s refunded Defunded Navajo Nation CARES Act Projects related to last mile broadband projects. With this funding NTUA estimates it can complete 18 broadcast stations that will provide wireless broadband services to unserved and underserved Navajo communities and will provide operation and maintenance expenses to continue the operation of 41 student/teacher Wi-Fi hotspots that are located throughout the Navajo Nation to support equitable and remote learning.

The 20 broadband broadcast station projects will include the cost of equipment, installation, operation, and maintenance to deliver broadband internet services to 20 Navajo communities. To provide the broadband services to these Navajo communities, NTUA Wireless will deploy the following technologies: 600 MHz and Fixed Wireless Broadband (EBS/2.5GHz).

The projects are designed to deliver 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload speeds (scalable to 100 Mbps download/upload) for users that are within a 3-mile radius of the EBS and CBRS sites assuming no interference with topography. For users within 9 miles with line of site to the tower with CBRS and EBS mid-band spectrum, the projects are also leverage and overlay 600 MHz licensed spectrum on the sites to provide additional reach to homes beyond 9 miles (up to approximately 15 miles (with speeds of 10 Mbps/1Mbps or higher). All three technologies, EBS, CBRS, and 600 MHz licensed spectrum, work in conjunction to maximize the range and speed for customers.

**Table 8:**

NTUA Broadband Last Mile Projects Stage		Status
1	Engineering Design Stage	0
2	Procurement Stage	29
3	Released for Construction Stage	0
4	Testing and Commissioning Stage	0
5	Constructed and In Service Stage	41
<b>Total</b>		<b>61</b>

## **5.20 BROADBAND: OTHER PROJECTS**

The Navajo Nation approved NNFRF for NTUA's refunded Defunded Navajo Nation CARES Act middle mile projects completing mid-section infrastructure to enable internet connectivity in communities. With this funding NTUA estimates it can complete 10 middle mile projects, which include 2 towers, 2 fiber lines, and 6 fiber line make-ready projects. The fiber lines provide transport for the NTUA Wireless broadcast stations, enabling them to provide wireless broadband services.

The towers and associated microwave links as well as the fiber optic lines will provide transport at gigabit speeds which meet and exceed the 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload speeds that are required by the U.S. Department of Treasury. Without the middle mile projects, the last mile projects to users cannot work. NTUA's 6 fiber line make-ready projects will upgrade the electrical infrastructure to enable fiber line attachments which provides broadband services. Of these 10 projects, NTUA has completed the construction of 7 projects.

There are 3 projects in the development stage. NTUA is currently in the process of obtaining leases from the Navajo Land Department. Once the leases are finalized, NTUA can begin construction of the towers. Furthermore, NTUA anticipates cost savings from the make ready construction projects and shall construct additional fiber and tower projects as requested.

**Table 9: Broadband**

NTUA Broadband Middle Mile Projects Stage	Status
Engineering Design Stage	0
Right-of-Way Stage	3
Procurement Stage	0
Released for Construction Stage	0
Testing and Commissioning Stage	0
Constructed and In-Service Stage	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>



## **Information for you to Share with Chapters and Chapter Residents Seeking New Utility Service or Utility Payment Assistance**

1. **Chapter Powerline Projects:** If your Chapter is interested in seeking funding from the ARPA for a chapter powerline project, please refer to NTUA's website under "ARPA Projects" to see if the Chapter's powerline project is already on NTUA's ARPA list. If the proposed projects are not on the list or if your chapter needs further assistance, please contact Shannon Burnette at [shannonb@ntua.com](mailto:shannonb@ntua.com).

2. **Seeking Residential Electric Connection:**

If community members need residential electric service and believe they are within two miles of an NTUA Electric distribution line, please encourage community members to visit their local NTUA District Office and apply for the Light Up Navajo (LUN) project.

Please understand it is not guaranteed that the applicant will qualify or receive electric connection through LUN project. There is more information on the next page.



3. **Seeking Off-Grid Residential Solar:** If community members need residential electric service and cannot be connected to a powerline, they may qualify for an off grid solar unit. Please encourage community members to visit a local NTUA District Office to submit application for an off grid solar unit. The off grid solar program is available in all 110 chapters.

4. **Seeking Residential Waterline Extensions:** If Community members need water service to their homes and they believe they are within ½ mile from an NTUA water line, please encourage members to visit their local NTUA District Office and apply for the ARPA Water Service Project. Please understand it is not guaranteed that the applicant will qualify or receive water service.

5. **Seeking Broadband Service:** If a Chapter is seeking additional or expanded Broadband service for their communities, please contact Monroe Keedo at [monroek@ntua.com](mailto:monroek@ntua.com). Mr. Keedo will provide information on existing and proposed new service locations including new towers and fiberoptic buildouts.

6. **Seeking Residential Broadband Service:** Community members and small businesses seeking broadband services can contact Choice NTUA Wireless for information on new residential and small business services. Choice NTUA Wireless also offers Wi-Fi hotspots free of charge in key locations to assist with combatting the pandemic. Lastly, community members currently enrolled in the Choice Lifeline or Choice Tribal Lifeline plan may also qualify for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). For further information, please call 928-730-2273.



## NTUA initiates application drive for Light Up Navajo IV at the conclusion of Light Up Navajo III

The Light Up Navajo III program ended on June 18th. Beginning on April 3, 2022, NTUA has been hosting visiting utility companies to work alongside NTUA electric crews to extend electricity to as many homes as possible. As the program ended, NTUA received inquiries from residents throughout the Navajo Nation asking about the project and how to qualify. Consequently, NTUA has decided to begin the application process for Light Up Navajo IV.

**History:** Light Up Navajo is a humanitarian mutual aid project. In other parts of the U.S., when an area gets hit with a natural disaster and power goes out, utility companies send electric crews to that region to help restore power.

Using the same concept, utility companies are sending crews to the Navajo Nation to help connect homes to the electric grid for the very first time. Light Up Navajo has become known as Mutual Aid without a Storm.

**How to apply:** If a homeowner is interested – please have them stop by any NTUA District Office and ask about the electric connection program called Light Up Navajo. The homeowner must be the individual who applies.

NTUA Customer Care agents will meet with residents to explain how the program works, including what is required.

- All projects must have a home-site lease, per requirement of the Navajo Nation Land Department. If the resident doesn't have one, NTUA will explain how to apply for one.
- Some projects may not qualify due to distance from the nearest powerline. That determination will be made after the initial site visit.
- Homeowners can login to the Light Up Navajo page on the NTUA website [www.ntua.com](http://www.ntua.com). They will submit their inquiry and NTUA will follow-up.

