



MESCALERO Apache TRIBE

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September 29, 2023

Dear Tribal Members:

Today, we write to update you on the shutdown of the federal government. We, your tribal leadership, have been monitoring shutdown negotiations very closely over the last couple of weeks. We had hoped that a shutdown could be averted. Unfortunately, that does not appear to be the case.

Here is what you need to know about the shutdown:

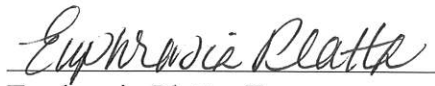
- Earlier this year, the Tribe joined other tribes across the country in lobbying for advance appropriations for Indian Health Services. We were successful. This means that no Indian Health employees will be furloughed and services should continue without interruption.
- BIA-Wildland Fire and BIA-Law Enforcement services will continue. However, some BIA-Regional Office and Mescalero Agency staff will be furloughed. BIA employees will be notified on Monday of their status. This will cause delays in certain BIA administrative functions, like responding to requests for technical assistance and processing of payments to individuals with IIM accounts and foster care assistance. However, the White House and the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs Bryan Newland assured us that the BIA and other federal agencies have contingency plans to ensure that important BIA functions continue.
- Mescalero Apache Schools, which is funded largely by the Bureau of Indian Education, will function as normal because the BIE is "forward-funded" (the BIE already received its funding).
- No Tribal departments will shut down. There are some Tribal departments which are funded partially or wholly through 638-contracts with the BIA or IHS. This includes: Tribal Courts, Social Services, Four Directions Treatment and Recovery Center, Community Health Representatives, Division of Resource Management and Protection, etc. We expect that these Tribal departments will not be affected unless the shutdown continues for months. However, please keep in mind that the longest shutdown in history was thirty-five (35) days in length.
- Many Tribal members depend on state nutrition assistance programs, like Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP) -Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), which are federally funded. Please be advised that these programs will run out of funding as soon as next week.

Undoubtedly, there will be impacts on the Tribal members. This is especially true for those Tribal members who are federal employees and furloughed. At the same time, we know that some individuals will share incorrect information in order to cause confusion, panic, and discontent. We encourage you to ignore rumors and to reach out to us should you have any questions.

We will continue to lobby to end the shutdown. We are hopeful that Congress will come to an agreement soon.


Sincerely,

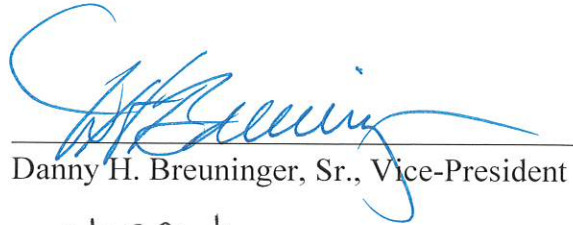

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