



MASHPEE WAMPANOAG TRIBE COVID-19 YOUTH MEMBER ASSISTANCE

General Welfare Benefit Program

December 04, 2020

Program Description

This general welfare assistance program is adopted pursuant to Tribal Council Resolution 2020-RES-060 and is intended to provide financial assistance to benefit Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Youth whose families are suffering from economic hardship caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency and who therefore need additional economic assistance.

Economic Need

As a result of the COVID19 pandemic, the Tribe has suspended certain tribal government operations, programs and services and has curtailed the operations of its businesses, consistent with tribal, state, and federal government orders and recommendations, including guidelines provided by the federal Centers for Disease Control and prevention (CDC). The curtailment of these operations, programs and services has occurred at the same time that tribal members have experienced increased unemployment and underemployment caused by stay-at-home orders and the closure or slow-down of businesses. Further, families have a need for assistance specific to supporting their youth, as the COVID-19 health emergency has caused tribal members and their families to take on additional responsibilities that are normally covered by teachers, school lunch programs, and other community services.

For these reasons, the Tribe has determined that it is necessary to provide general welfare assistance on an emergency basis to support Tribal Youth. This assistance can help defray the costs of living expenses including, but not limited to, additional costs for food, utilities, supplies and costs for distance learning and/or attending school on a limited basis, medical costs, and other expenses for children that have been or are expected to be incurred as a direct result of the COVID-19 public health emergency between March 1, 2020 through December 30, 2020.

In establishing this program, the Tribe has determined that this is the most administratively feasible way to ensure that tribal members receive emergency assistance in a timely fashion. The urgency and need of the emergency are underscored by the following data, which demonstrates that the Tribe's membership and its children are significantly economically disadvantaged even before the COVID-19 public health emergency forced closures and created additional unemployment:

- The 2019 80% of median income was \$6,100 per month for a family of 4,
(<https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il/il2019/2019summary.odn?year=2019&states>)



[=25.0&data=2019&inputname=METRO12700M12700*2500103690%2BBarnstable+Town+city&stname=Massachusetts&statefp=25&selection_type=county.](#)

- The monthly cost of living wage for Barnstable County, MA for 1 adult and 3 children is \$6,440 (<https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/25001>).
- The median household monthly income for the past 12 months in 2018 inflation adjusted dollars for American Indian and Alaska Native Alone Households) as reported by the US Indian Health Service for the Contract Health Service Delivery Area for Barnstable County was \$4,737, well below the average cost of living.
https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=United%20States&table=DP05&tid=ACSDT5Y2018.B19013C&g=0100000US_0500000US25001,25005,25021,25023,25025&lastDisplayedRow=29&vintage=2018&layer=state&cid=DP05_0001E&t=American%20Indian%20and%20Alaska%20Native
- COVID-19 impact on children has been documented as devastating, increasing risks for children falling behind in school, increased rates of mental health and domestic violence issues, and recommends economic support to families to continue education, assistance for essential support for food and healthcare, etc.
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/04/09/covid-19s-devastating-impact-children#>

The Tribe allocated COVID-19 emergency assistance to the adult members of the Tribe, and recognized the additional economic need for its members to support its children who are primarily at home and in need of continuing education and other increased costs of living needs. The Tribe has allocated Coronavirus Relief Fund money provided to it under Title V of the CARES Act to fund this COVID-19 Emergency Relief Assistance Program, consistent with the requirements of CARES Act and Guidance issues by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

Emergency Assistance Benefit

Based on economic data and the general state of economic hardship from conditions of, but not exclusive to, unemployment, reduced employment or self-employed business income, increased costs of living, increased costs for telework including looking for work and maintaining school work from home, costs for utilities and food, and the economic uncertainty during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Tribe has determined to provide emergency general welfare assistance to its members. It further has determined that the emergency assistance must be distributed quickly. The Tribe has determined that it is necessary, as a matter of administrative feasibility, to distribute this assistance in the manner described within this Program.

The Tribe will distribute \$500 for each eligible Tribal Youth to the custodial parent or guardian who has submitted a complete Application Form on which the custodial parent or guardian has certified the economic need for the member children. Payments for those who have submitted a



complete Application Form may expect a distribution to start in December, 2020. The distribution is based on the continued availability of funds as approved by the Tribal Council. There will be no additional payments after the Application deadline date absent further approval by the Tribal Council.

The financial assistance provided to tribal members under this COVID-19 Emergency Assistance Program is nontaxable consistent with the federal Tribal General Welfare Exclusion Act, Public Law 113-168, and Internal Revenue Code Regulation 139 for Disaster Relief. The Tribal Council has determined that the emergency assistance described in this Program is reasonable and necessary, and neither lavish nor extravagant under the current COVID-19 pandemic circumstances. This emergency assistance does not discriminate in favor of any Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Council member, nor is it given in compensation for services.

Eligibility

A Tribal Youth is eligible to benefit from this program if he or she is aged 17 or under, appears on the Tribe's official tribal enrollment, all as certified by the Tribe's Enrollment Office, and whose custodial parent or legal guardian has submitted a signed Application Form that is approved as eligible in accordance with this program.

The funds received are to be used as specified by this program and cannot be used to cover costs already covered by other CARES Act funding from the Tribe. Should a funds received under this this Assistance for Tribal Youth Program not be used as required by this program, or a determination is made that the funds are not needed for the purposes allowed per this program, any unused funds should be returned to the Tribe prior to or no later than December 30, 2020.

Application Form

Custodial parents or legal guardians of Tribal Youth must fill out the Tribe's approved Application Form to certify their economic need for Youth support and the use of the assistance payments, identifying all eligible Tribal Youth in the household that will benefit from the payments. Application Forms will be available on the Tribe's website; requests for the Application Form may also be emailed to the Enrollment Office. Application Forms deadline is November 30, 2020 at 5:00pm. Checks will be distributed as approved Applications are processed after the deadline.

The Tribe's Enrollment office will verify the enrollment; afterwards the Tribe's contracted CPA firm, REDW will verify whether the Application Form is complete (that one or more COVID-19 related economic impacts has been selected or identified by the Applicant and that the Application has been certified by the Application by signing and dating). Incomplete



applications will be returned to the applicant with a time-limited opportunity to providing missing information or correct errors.

Approved:

The Tribe Tribal Council has adopted Resolution #060 that authorizes this COVID-19 Youth Emergency Assistance - General Welfare Benefit Program.