

# COMMUNITY UPDATE

DIVISION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

December 2024

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## Did You Know...

The string games are made up of various weaving and braiding techniques as well as knot tying. In traditional families, string games are a way to gain wisdom. The games are played during the Winter only because this is when a spider is quiet or sleeping. <https://bit.ly/3BGm4M9>

## Events:

### December: Nítch'itsoh - Big Winds

December 7: National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

December 14: National Energy Conservation Day

December 21: First Day of Winter/ Winter Solstice

December 25: Christmas Day

December 31: New Year's Eve

### January: Yasnilt'ees - The Thawing of Snow

January 1: New Year's Day

January 20: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January 20: U.S. Inauguration Day



## A DREAM AND PRAYER COME TRUE – A NEW MULTIPURPOSE BUILDING FOR THE COMMUNITY OF MARIANO LAKE, NEW MEXICO

December 31, 2024

by Leandra K. James, [marianolake@navajochapters.org](mailto:marianolake@navajochapters.org)

CHAPTER OFFICIALS: Jay R. DeGroat, Henry King, Henry P. Begay, Jr.

COMMUNITY LAND USE PLANNING COMMITTEE: Jeremy DeGroat, Sharon Carolus, Marie A. Bennett, Harrison Mariano, Shanidiin Jeff, Linda Schweigman, and Henry King



The project officially began on Thursday, October 27, 2016, with a “Mariano Lake Chapter Building Planning Workshop.” The entire community was involved, including many participants from other neighboring communities. At the time, a decision needed to be made: either accept two used small modular buildings from the Gallup-McKinley County Schools to serve as space for the Veterans and Senior Committee or proceed with planning and design for a building that would benefit the community as a whole. A voting process was conducted—community members stood in favor of their option by standing on opposite sides of the building. Only one community member stood in favor of the used modular buildings. The majority stood in favor of a building that would unify the entire community. Therefore, the decision was made by the community to have a building that would serve everyone and hold all servicing offices: Chapter Administration, Veterans, Senior Citizens, Community Health Representative, and the Youth.

Upon the decision of the community, the planning phase began with implementation by the Chapter Administration, Chapter Officials, Community Land Use Planning Committee, and the Capital Projects Management Department. Initially, the plan was to renovate and add to the original Chapter building. However, after various assessments were conducted, it was concluded that the building had exceeded its lifespan and was identified as unsafe for the



general public. This changed the scope of the project from renovation to new construction.

The planning and designs were completed in 2019 with Indigenous Design Studio + Architecture, LLC (IDSA). Immediately, construction funds were sought and obtained from various grants during the national COVID-19 pandemic. Moving forward, in 2020, the Mariano Lake Chapter moved into a temporary office building, formerly the HeadStart classroom. The original Chapter building was demolished to vacate and prepare for the new construction.

Mariano Lake Chapter obtained construction funds in 2020 and 2021 from New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, the State of New Mexico Indian Affairs Department, New Mexico Aging & Long-Term Services Department, Senator Benny Shendo, Representative Eliseo Alcon, and the New Mexico Tribal Infrastructure Board Committee. Although funding was secured from the State of New Mexico, the Chapter did not have full funding.

Mariano Lake Chapter then secured support from Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie, the 24th Council Delegates of the Navajo Nation, and the entire administration of Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez, Vice President Myron Lizer, and Chief of Staff Paulson Chaco. The Navajo Nation supported and approved the remaining construction funds for Mariano Lake Chapter and the community through Navajo Nation Legislation #0159-22: An Act Relating to the Resources and Development, Budget and Finance, and Naabik'iyáti' Committees, and to the Navajo Nation Council; Allocating \$10,031,897 from the Síhasin Fund for the Mariano Lake Chapter Multipurpose Building Project; Approving the Related Expenditure Plan Pursuant to 12 N.N.C. §2501 - §2508. Sponsor: Honorable Edmund Yazzie; Co-Sponsor: Honorable Raymond Smith, Jr.



The legislation was approved by the Navajo Nation 24th Council and Speaker Pro Tem Jamie Henio on December 29, 2022. On January 6, 2023, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez signed the legislation at the Mariano Lake Chapter, solidifying the Navajo Nation's financial support for the community and opening the doors for the procurement stage.

Chapter Secretary/Treasurer Mr. Henry P. Begay, Jr., stated, "We mustn't forget all the financial contributions from the State of New Mexico and the Navajo Nation to make a project of this size successful. It takes a lot of dollars, and we're very appreciative of the funds that were gathered and approved. A special thanks to Leandra James, Lucinda Yazzie, and Myrna James for keeping the focus and making sure that this day came. Mariano Lake Chapter takes pride in the team effort and the whole teamwork because a project of this magnitude takes key people to make it happen, mainly the Chapter Officials working hand in hand with the Chapter Administration and collaboratively working with our Council Delegate Steven Arviso because, as a lawmaker, he brings the information back to the community, including the Community Land Use Planning Committee. We take pride in the team that was established. I'd like to acknowledge former Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and former Council Delegate Edmund Yazzie. It was one of their last duties to secure funding for Mariano Lake."

On April 26, 2024, Capital Projects Management Department Manager Mr. Dwayne Waseta handled the project as the immediate Project Manager for the Mariano Lake Chapter and, on behalf of the Navajo Nation, implemented the procurement process for the selection of the construction contractor. Upon selection, the contract then went through the Nation's 164 process for final approval. The construction will be completed by Arviso Construction.

On December 12, 2024, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren approved the construction contract for the "Mariano Lake Chapter New Multipurpose Building." The 11,900-square-foot building will accommodate the Chapter Administration, Senior Center, Veterans Center, Computer Lab with Library, and Meeting Facility to provide services to the entire community in one location.

Mr. Henry King, Chapter Vice President, expressed his excitement: "I'm very excited about everything falling into place and that we'll be getting our building soon enough. I'm very thankful President Nygren signed our contract and gave the community the surety for the building to be constructed. I thank my whole team—the Community Land Use Planning Committee, Chapter President DeGroat, Chapter Secretary/Treasurer Begay, Lucinda, Leandra, and all the staff—for their hard work and commitment."





Jay R. DeGroat, the current Chapter President of Mariano Lake Chapter since 2016, began this project not only with the Chapter Administration and Community Land Use Planning Committee but also with the late Chapter Vice President Henry T. Begay and the late Chapter Secretary/Treasurer Linda Thomas. Serving two terms as Chapter President, Mr. DeGroat pushed the project forward for the community, but his term concludes upon the 2025 Navajo Nation Inauguration. As a gem to the Mariano Lake Community, he is also the designer of the Navajo Nation Flag.

With great appreciation, Mr. DeGroat stated, "I'd like to acknowledge everyone who played a part in approving our Multipurpose Building Project, but I'd first like to begin my appreciation with Ms. Leandra K. James for not only implementing this project but for first getting us together to decide on a building that would benefit all community members: youth, educational endeavors through our most updated equipment, a place to accommodate Veterans to congregate and receive the necessary services they deserve, and mostly to provide a more nutritional and sustainable food service for our elders and community. And to provide a gathering place for all community members in conducting meetings, public information services, recreational activities such as recognizing the anniversary of our community, and public functions. Additionally, to provide a facility to obtain services from outside resources such as public health, education, and to accommodate an overall Eastern Agency meeting that our Chapter could host in the future. Finally, to maintain a facility that will communicate through multimedia when necessary, such as emergencies, etc. A more conducive workstation for our employees and their accessibility to critical and current information. Lastly, to provide a more community-based educational opportunity for our local high school and college students. I believe this project will set precedence for other Chapters and communities."

Realistically, the life of the project was challenged with many unprecedented obstacles, including financial setbacks and a national pandemic. However, through perseverance and dedication, the entire team of Mariano Lake Chapter continued to make necessary adjustments for the success of the new building and worked together as a unit, embracing and displaying the true meaning of "Unity" within the word "Community."



A joyous & momentous groundbreaking ceremony took place on December 30, 2024 with the community members and all invited guests. A special thanks to Senator Benny Shendo, Edmund Yazzie Casey Begay, and Orville Arviso for joining the festivities with the community members.





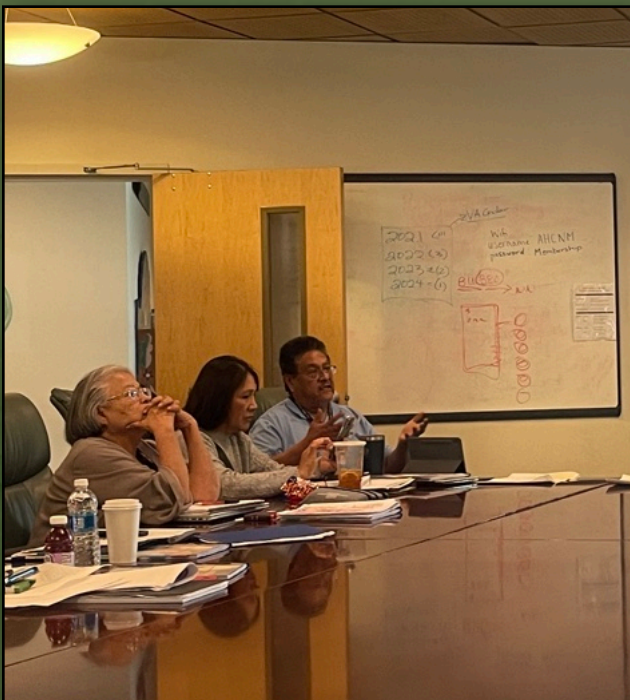
# CPMD Collaborates with New Mexico Indian Affairs Department to Address Project Challenges

On December 15th and 16th, the Capital Project Management Department (CPMD) under the Division of Community Development joined forces with the State of New Mexico Indian Affairs Department staff for a productive joint work session. The two-day meeting focused on reviewing ongoing projects funded during fiscal periods 2021 through 2024.

The work session provided an opportunity to examine project scopes and address funding challenges unique to the Navajo Nation, particularly those stemming from the rural locations of many projects. These geographical and logistical factors often require tailored solutions to ensure projects are completed effectively and on schedule.



Key discussions centered around the allocation and management of funds, overcoming obstacles related to infrastructure development in remote areas, and aligning priorities between the Navajo Nation and the State of New Mexico.



At the conclusion of the session, both entities worked collaboratively to cross-check and compare project information. This effort was aimed at ensuring that communication remains transparent and accurate, fostering stronger partnerships and paving the way for successful project execution.

The CPMD and Indian Affairs Department remain committed to addressing the unique needs of rural communities and enhancing collaboration to drive impactful development projects.





# Tse' Lichii (Red Rock) Chapter House Renovation Project Update

## Transforming Restrooms for Accessibility and Comfort

by Leonard Hardy

The Tse' Lichii (Red Rock) Chapter is pleased to announce the completion of its restroom renovation project at the Chapter House. The Tse' Lichii (Red Rock) Chapter is thrilled to share the completion of the restroom renovation project at the Chapter House. This transformative upgrade reflects the Chapter's commitment to improving accessibility, functionality, and comfort for all community members and visitors.

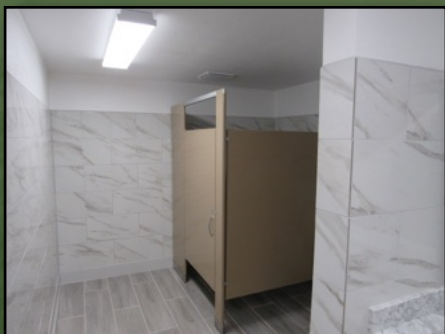
### Project Highlights

The renovation began with an extensive demolition phase, which involved:

- Gutting the entire men's and women's restrooms, including the removal of all aged plumbing fixtures, partitions, shower units, walls, flooring, and electrical components.
- Replacing the old sewer line beneath the restrooms to ensure reliable waste management.
- Rerouting the water lines from the attic space to beneath the restrooms to prevent freezing during cold weather.
- Removing shower units to open up space for properly sized handicap-accessible restroom stalls.



### New Installations and Upgrades



The restrooms were then outfitted with modern materials and equipment, including:

- A new water heater and floor sink to improve water heating efficiency and functionality.
- A new electrical system upgrade to support modern light fixtures and exhaust fans, ensuring better ventilation and illumination.
- Metal door frames and doors, designed for durability and improved security.
- The women's restroom received two handicap-accessible stalls equipped with sturdy handicap handrails for safety and convenience.



This comprehensive renovation not only enhances the usability of the facilities but also ensures that they meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, aligning with accessibility standards.



The Tse' Lichii (Red Rock) Chapter is proud to provide upgraded amenities that reflect the values of inclusion and community well-being.

These improvements are a testament to our ongoing dedication to fostering a welcoming and accommodating environment.

Thank you to the contractors, design team, and community members who made this project possible.





# Welcome to the Team: Marta Quintana and Brandan Brieno Join the Navajo Nation Capital Projects Management Department

The Navajo Nation Capital Projects Management Department (CPMD) is excited to welcome two new members to its growing team: Marta Quintana as Planner/Estimator and Brandan Brieno as Information Systems Technician. Their addition marks another step forward in enhancing CPMD's capacity to serve the Navajo Nation with excellence and innovation.

## Marta Quintana – Planner/Estimator

Marta Quintana joins CPMD as Planner/Estimator, bringing a strong background in infrastructure planning and project estimation. Originally from Steamboat, AZ, Marta is passionate about community-building and ensuring that projects are well-designed, cost-effective, and sustainable.

In addition to her professional expertise, Marta enjoys online gaming (especially COD) and occasionally reading books. She shared her enthusiasm for joining the team:

“I want to take this opportunity to express how excited I am to be joining the Department at this point. Please feel free to contact me if you'd like to get in touch. I'm looking forward to getting to know all of you and working together.”

Marta's role will involve collaborating with stakeholders to develop and estimate projects that meet the unique needs of the Navajo Nation. Her dedication and skills will be instrumental in delivering impactful projects for the community.



## Brandan Brieno – Information Systems Technician

Brandan Brieno steps into the vital role of Information Systems Technician, bringing valuable experience as a computer technician within a college setting. This past spring, Brandan earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Information Systems, equipping him with a strong foundation to excel in his new role. A tech-savvy professional with a passion for problem-solving, Brandan is eager to enhance the department's efficiency through innovative technological solutions.

His expertise will play a key role in maintaining and upgrading CPMD's IT infrastructure, ensuring seamless communication, robust data management, and streamlined operations.

Outside of work, Brandan enjoys listening to metal music and attending concerts from bands in the genre whenever he gets the chance.



## Strengthening the Mission

CPMD Department Manager Dwayne Waseta expressed his enthusiasm for the new hires:

“We're thrilled to welcome Marta and Brandan to the CPMD team. Their skills and dedication align perfectly with our mission to deliver high-quality projects that benefit the Navajo Nation. We're confident they will make a significant impact.”

As CPMD continues its work on various capital projects across the Navajo Nation, including senior centers, waterline extensions, and wellness facilities, the expertise of Marta Quintana and Brandan Brieno will play a crucial role in advancing the department's mission to serve the Navajo people.

Please join us in giving Marta and Brandan a warm welcome to the team!



# DCD Christmas Activities



*In December 2024, the DCD staff welcomed the holiday season with a series of festive activities throughout the month. Highlights included a delightful cookie exchange and a lively Ugly Sweater event, all leading up to a grand Christmas luncheon held at the picturesque Red Rock Room in Gallup, New Mexico. The team embraced the holiday spirit by decorating the office, playing games, and cherishing the joy of spending time together. These celebrations brought warmth, laughter, and camaraderie to the season.*





# Housing Improvement Program

## HIP Program Team update

The Housing Improvement Program (HIP) has been actively engaged throughout the year with the BIA/ARPA Housing Delivery, assisting applicants and constructing homes through regular BIA Housing Funds. The entire team, from administration to field workers, has demonstrated unwavering dedication to their work, helping applicants with housing assistance applications and building homes for selected recipients.

One of the key responsibilities of the administration is recognizing the efforts of our hard-working employees. This includes giving them breaks from their duties through training sessions, meetings to celebrate accomplishments, and team-building luncheons. These activities foster team spirit, provide support, and encourage everyone to continue delivering their best with the limited resources available.

During the first quarter of FY2025, HIP held several training sessions. We began with a Strategy Planning Meeting on October 31 and November 1, 2024. As a team, we developed one-, three-, and five-year strategy plans to ensure the program effectively serves both employees and the Navajo clientele. On November 12 and 19, 2024, HIP staff participated in CPR/First Aid Training. This training is highly encouraged, as much of the construction work occurs in remote areas where emergency services may not be readily available. Knowing basic first aid can be crucial while waiting for help to arrive.

To wrap up the year, the Eligibility Technician attended a training session on December 19 and 20, 2024, to review updates to forms and documentation requirements for the FY2026 Housing Assistance application outreach and presentation. On Friday, December 20, 2024, from 12:00 to 5:00 PM, HIP employees gathered for the Christmas Luncheon. This event was filled with delicious food, singing, laughter, and gift exchanges, providing an opportunity for staff to relax and enjoy the festive season.

The HIP team deserves heartfelt thanks for their dedication and resilience. Despite the significant amount of travel required by their jobs, they remain committed to their work. Special appreciation also goes to their families for their understanding and support.

## Housing Improvement Program

Rita M. Begay  
Program Manager I  
P.O. Box 527  
Fort Defiance, AZ

FORT DEFIANCE AGENCY  
Housing Improvement Program  
Bldg# 8229 Field House Road  
Google maps location  
PWPJ+2P  
Fort Defiance, Arizona 86504  
Phone No.# (928) 729-4017  
Fax No.# (928) 729-4277

CHINLE AGENCY  
Bldg #2492 SW of Chapter  
House  
Google maps location  
5C3Q+8W  
Chinle, Arizona 86503  
Phone No.# (928) 674-2260  
Fax No.# (928) 674-2266

EASTERN AGENCY  
Google maps location  
MVM2+83  
Crownpoint, New Mexico





# HIP Update: Training & Staff Luncheon

**Eligibility Technician Training**





# DCD ARPA Updates

## Indigenous MPH Students Partner with Forest Lake Chapter to Support Accessibility

Indigenous Master of Public Health (MPH) students from Northern Arizona University—Sierra Wilcox, Kyra Slim, and Chase Hubbell—are working in collaboration with Forest Lake Chapter officials to address critical accessibility needs in their community. This partnership seeks to secure funding for the construction of ADA-certified wheelchair ramps for elders and individuals with physical challenges within the Forest Lake community.

As part of their efforts, the students and Chapter officials recently met with the Navajo Department of Community Development (NDCD). This meeting served as a starting point to foster a partnership between the Forest Lake Chapter and NDCD, aiming to create a unified effort to improve accessibility for vulnerable community members.

The initiative underscores the importance of collaboration in addressing public health challenges and ensuring all members of the Forest Lake community have safe and equitable access to their homes and surroundings.

Division of Community Development ARPA and Fiscal Recovery Fund Office (FRFO) assisted in facilitating the discussion in reviewing Forest Lake Chapter's ARPA projects and prioritization of needs within the community. During this meeting the ARPA and FRFO provided an update to

the Forest Lake Chapter Officials present. The Division of Community Development commends Chase, Sierra and Kyra and the rest of the class assisting Forest Lake Chapter in identifying the needs in the community and being proactive in finding solutions to ensure the community members within Forest Lake Chapter have safe accessible homes.



## Many Farms Chapter receives delivery of new Rural Addressing Truck with RRR Funds

December 10, 2024 Many Farms Chapter received their new 2024 Chevrolet Colorado to be utilized by the staff to establish physical addresses of a house/dwelling (addressable structure). To establish a system within the Many Farms community to better serve the needs of the community in emergency situations or getting packages delivered. This purchase was the first of many utilizing the Revenue Replacement Reserve Fund formerly the Delegate Region ARPA projects. Congratulations Many Farms and we look forward to the completion of your project!



# ASC locations upgrade

## Improving Broadband Connectivity for the Navajo Nation: A Step Toward Greater Support

The Navajo Nation has long faced challenges in securing reliable broadband services, which has made it difficult to provide the level of support and guidance needed across the region. However, the Division of Community Development (DCD) has been actively working to improve connectivity, aiming to provide the robust services that are critical for the area's development and communication.

One of the  
been to

DCD's key goals has  
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connectivity to Area Service Center (ASC) offices, facilitating better communication between regional offices and the chapters they support. This improvement is essential not only for internal operations but also for fostering stronger connections with the local communities served by these offices.

After years of effort, the goal of enhancing communication infrastructure is now nearly complete. More than five ASC offices—located in Tuba City, Kayenta, Crownpoint, Gallup, and Fort Defiance—have successfully transitioned to satellite-based broadband services. This upgrade enables these offices to better support local chapters by offering remote assistance, participating in online meetings, and receiving communications in a timely and efficient manner.

The transition to satellite services represents a significant milestone in the DCD's ongoing efforts to bridge the digital divide and ensure that each community center has the tools needed for effective operations. As more offices are connected, the goal of creating a more cohesive and responsive network across the Navajo Nation is closer to becoming a reality.



*Thank You CPMD for your help!*



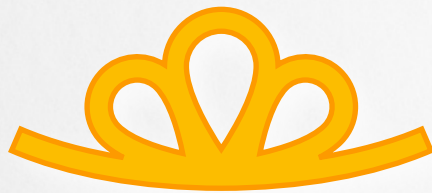
# ASC DEPARTMENT

## ❄️ *Winter Staff Mtg* ❄️

*On Monday December 23rd, 2024, the ASC department gathered at the Navajoland Inn in St. Michaels, AZ, for a productive and festive day of team building, planning, and celebration. The agenda included updates on department goals, 2025 Chapter Orientations, and a discussion of the ASC/Chapter FY25 budget.*

*Staff also participated in holiday-themed games, a gift exchange, and an employee appreciation segment, making the day both engaging and enjoyable. Highlights of the event included insights shared by facilitator Jaron Charley and collaborative planning sessions to set the stage for a successful year ahead.*

*Stay tuned for more updates and photos of our staff in action!*

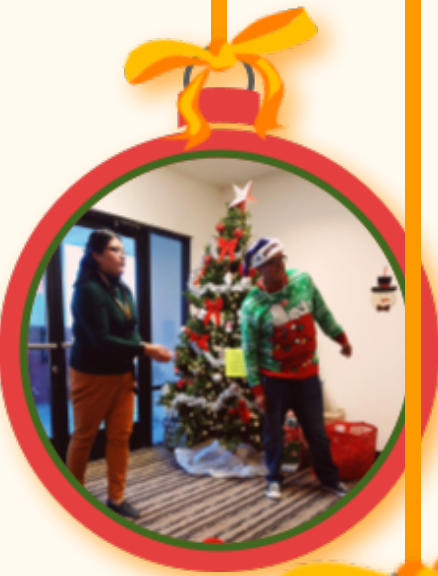




# ASC DEPARTMENT

## ❄️ *Winter Staff Mtg* ❄️

# NAUGHTY OR NICE



*Holiday cheer in action! Our staff got competitive during the 'Naughty or Nice' game, aiming for Christmas buckets with coal for points and prizes. Smiles, laughter, and a few gift cards to local restaurants made it a festive and memorable gathering!*



# ASC DEPARTMENT

## *Winter Staff Mtg*

### SECRET SANTA

*Spreading holiday joy with our Secret Santa gift exchange! Staff shared thoughtful gifts inspired by questionnaires about favorite colors, hobbies, and more, while discovering fun new tidbits about each other. A heartwarming way to connect and celebrate the season!*





## *Administrative Services Centers*

# STAFF UPDATES

## EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER: ROBERT JUMBO

*Congratulations to Mr. Robert Jumbo, our Employee of the Quarter!*

*Recognized for his dedication and exceptional work at the ASC Winter Staff Meeting on December 23rd, Mr. Jumbo went above and beyond by supporting both the Chinle and Kayenta ASC Offices during a challenging time. His expertise and commitment helped our department navigate staffing shortages and the continuing resolution for the Navajo Nation government.*

*Thank you, Mr. Jumbo, for your outstanding contributions!*

## ASC - CROWNPOINT OFFICE WELCOMES NEW SPSS

*We are thrilled to welcome Heather Yazzie-Kinlacheeny as the new Senior Programs & Projects Specialist for our Crownpoint Local Office! A Thoreau High School alumna, Heather earned her bachelor's in Environmental Studies and Native American Studies from Dartmouth College.*

*She brings extensive experience from her work as a legislative district assistant for Council Delegate Steven Arviso and as Smith Lake Chapter Vice President. Heather's leadership and expertise in local government uniquely position her to support our mission of working closely with chapters. Welcome aboard, Heather!*





# WELCOME NEW STAFF!

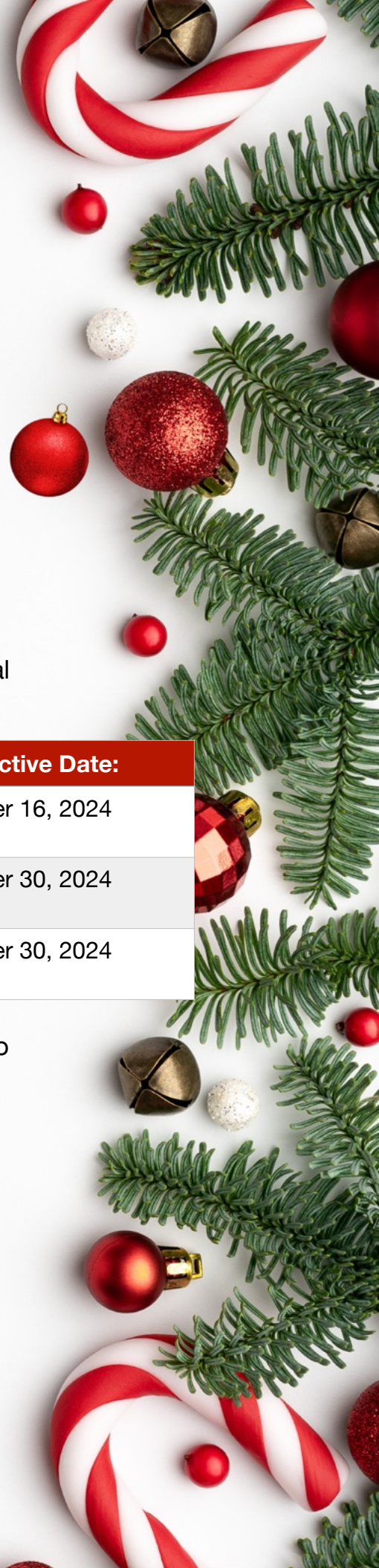
We're thrilled to include in this month's newsletter some exciting news: we've expanded our team with the addition of new members dedicated to serving our communities! Please join us in extending a warm welcome to our newest team members.

These individuals bring with them a wealth of experience and enthusiasm, and we couldn't be more delighted to have them on board. Their roles are integral to our mission of delivering essential services to communities throughout the Navajo Nation.

Applicant Name:	Chapter:	Position:	PAF Effective Date:
Lucinda Carey	Rock Springs Chapter	AMS	December 16, 2024
Marveya Tsinnijinnie	GadiiAhi Chapter	AMS	December 30, 2024
Audrey Michelle Joe	Churchrock Chapter	AMS	December 30, 2024

Our ASC Department and chapters are buzzing with excitement to integrate these valuable additions into our team. We're eager to witness the positive impact they will undoubtedly make under the Division of Community Development.

Let's give a hearty welcome to our new team members, and here's to the bright future ahead as we continue our journey of service and community empowerment together!





# Bulletin Board

## Arbin Mitchell sworn in as District 6 Council Delegate



**Arbin Mitchell (second from left) is joined by his family as he is sworn in by Navajo Nation Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne.**

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Today, Arbin Mitchell was officially sworn in as the elected Council Delegate for District 6 by Chief Justice JoAnn Jayne at the Navajo Nation Supreme Court. His term begins immediately, representing the communities of Houck, Klagetoh, Nahata Dziil, Tsé Si Ani, and Wide Ruins.

A native of Wide Ruins, Mitchell assumes the position following the resignation of former Council Delegate Lomardo Aseret on September 30, 2024. As the newly elected delegate, Mitchell brings a wealth of leadership experience to the role.

“On behalf of the 25th Navajo Nation Council, I would like to congratulate Arbin Mitchell on winning the District 6 seat for Council Delegate,” said Speaker Crystalyne Curley. “The Council looks forward to the guidance he will provide to the chapters he

represents.”

Mitchell’s public service career spans decades, with key roles in both executive and legislative leadership. He previously served as Chief of Staff under Presidents Russell Begaye, Ben Shelly, and Speaker LoRenzo Bates. His experience also includes working as a staff assistant during the presidential administrations of Albert Hale, Kelsey Begaye, Joe Shirley Jr., and Jonathan Nez.

Mitchell supports the Council’s focus on strengthening its relationship with the federal government, especially as the new administration takes office in January.

“I am excited to serve in the legislative branch,” Mitchell said. “It’s about advocating for our people and securing funding for chapter projects that have long been waiting

for attention.”

During the swearing-in ceremony, Mitchell expressed his gratitude to District 6 voters and reaffirmed his commitment to serving their needs. He emphasized the importance of collaboration and pledged to use his experience to advance initiatives that will benefit both his constituents and the broader Navajo Nation.

Mitchell is Tódích’íí’nii, born for Áshijhi. His maternal grandfathers are Kinyaa’áanii, and his paternal grandfathers are Honágháahnii.

As a new delegate, Mitchell is preparing to engage with chapter officials, community members, and other leaders to address the pressing issues facing his constituency.

READ MORE: <https://bit.ly/4fAc8S1>



# Bulletin Board

## Diné Bizaad Becomes the Official Language of Navajo Nation



On Christmas Eve, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren signed legislation to make the Navajo language the official language of the Navajo Nation. (Photo/Navajo Nation)

On Christmas Eve, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren signed long-awaited legislation to have the Navajo language used, taught and supported by appropriations. With his signature, Diné bizaad, is now the official language of the Navajo Nation.

"One of my priorities coming in as President has always been to make sure that we make Navajo cool again," he said. "It's exciting to see the work that's being done. And, so, I commend the Navajo Nation Council for doing that, and I really want to commend all of you for doing that."

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Navajo Nation Council Delegate Shawna Claw sponsored the legislation to establish Navajo as the official language of the Navajo Nation. She states, "Since time immemorial, our people have survived by maintaining our value system given by the Holy People. The core of our value system is embedded in the language."

"As Diné, we are the image of our ancestors, and we are created in connection with all creation. Upon our creation we are identified by: Our Diné name, our clan, our language, our way of life way, our shadow, our footprints. Therefore, we are called the Holy Earth-Surface-People - Diyin Nohookáád Diné."

President Nygren emphasized that today's leaders must ensure future generations of Navajos have the opportunity to learn the language of their grandparents and great-grandparents.

"What kind of opportunities can they have to learn

our beautiful Navajo language?" he asked. "Today is going to be a good day because we're going to sign that into law. Then it's the official language of the Navajo Nation."

He said he is grateful to all the teachers of the Navajo language who work hard across the Navajo Nation to teach this precious language to young ones.

"Signing this into law is really going to showcase to them that they're the ones that should be put at the forefront when they're really making things work," he said. "Again, all the Navajo language teachers out there, thank you."

He expressed his desire to establish a program that trains lawyers and judges to speak Navajo, enabling them to serve on the bench. Additionally, he aims to collaborate with the Diné Language Teachers Association to promote the use of the Navajo language.

He shared that he reflects daily on ways the Nation can make significant strides in fostering the use, preservation, and perpetuation of the Navajo language. He also noted that his office includes a veterans liaison, an MMIW representative, and a disabilities liaison to provide support when needed.

"Then I thought to myself, why can't I have a Navajo language and cultural advisor?" he asked.

After a Google search, he discovered longtime Navajo language teacher and translator Peter Thomas had worked on children's books like the ones he reads daily to his children.

He called Salina Bookshelf in Flagstaff that specializes in a wide variety of Navajo language books to inquire

about Mr. Thomas.

"I said, hey, do you have Peter Thomas' number? I'd like to give him a call," the President said.

In November, Mr. Thomas was hired as an Executive Staff Assistant to implement strategies and approaches to make Diné bizaad "the heart of my administration."

"When you come to the Office of the President, you will see signage about Keshmish in Diné bizaad," President Nygren wrote to the Council. "These phrases are learned or reinforced in our office and taken home by the staff to share with their families this holiday season."

The President said one of the first executive branch projects will be to have the Navajo Division of Transportation design stop signs in the Navajo language that read "Áłtsé."

Next, the Division of Public Safety will have Navajo Police cars display the word for police, "Silao."

"All across the Navajo Nation, I want to say thank you to the Navajo Nation Council for championing this legislation, and to the sponsors and everybody that's been involved and that voted to really make this happen," the President said.

"I think that to really fulfill the intentions of the legislation, how do we put some dollars and resources behind it so that we can actually put a dent into teaching the language," he said. "I think in order to do that, we're going to need some dollars and resources actually allocated with this legislation."

Read more at: <https://bit.ly/4eIC835>



# Bulletin Board

## Navajo woman is rising-star at NASA



NASA intern Tara Roanhorse (Courtesy/NASA)

The first words spoken by Tara Roanhorse at her NASA internship were a traditional Navajo greeting: "Yá'át'ééh shík'éeí dóó shíidiné'é," "Hello my friends and my relations, my name is Tara Roanhorse. I am of Irish heritage, born for the black streak wooded people. My maternal grandfather is of Irish heritage and my paternal grandfather is of the Bitter Water people. I am from Kimberling City, Missouri. In this way, I am a Navajo woman."

As an intern in NASA's Office of STEM Engagement, Roanhorse is responsible for helping to reach audiences via social media to get NASA STEM resources into as many hands as possible and ensure potential interns know there

is space for them at NASA. Since the beginning she's been led by her Native heritage; as a Diné woman, she's familiar with what it means to feel like an outsider. "Indigenous people and women aren't very represented in STEM spaces, so it felt like a long shot when I applied," said Roanhorse. "Aside from my time at my Tribal University, I'm often the only Indigenous person in the room."

As a STEM Communications intern, Roanhorse's work includes writing blogs about current and former interns, creating content and providing support for social media accounts, and supporting wherever she can with helping to create engaging and informative content across her team.

"I really enjoy being able to create things that help put STEM in people's hands in a way that they can understand," Roanhorse said. "There are so many great resources out there for kids, adults, tribes and schools that haven't traditionally been so accessible, so my personal goal is to help everyone be able to access the work that's being done."

Although now a familiar face at NASA, Tara had her doubts at first.

"Growing up I was always interested in science and technology but wasn't always the best at practicing it, but I was good at explaining things to people," she said. "That's why, when I returned to get my college education in my early twenties, I knew STEM communications was something that I wanted to do."

NASA's missions are strengthened by the diversity of worldviews of its workforce.

"My heritage and culture have provided a different lens through which to see the work that's being done," Roanhorse said. "My tribe has a holistic and ordered worldview; everything is interrelated and enfolds into the whole."

Now having led campaigns that have reached audiences in the tens of millions, and supported collaborations with the likes of Megan Thee Stallion, Roanhorse shares some of her advice for others.

"Be willing to try something new and scary. Every day, I get the chance to do something different, expanding my knowledge in the best possible ways," she said. "And while imposter syndrome is so real, you were meant for great things – you are your ancestor's wildest dreams come true. No one else has the experiences, outlook, or ideas as you. You are unique, and you have something to contribute to the world and to NASA's missions."

Apply for NASA's internship program at [intern.nasa.gov](https://intern.nasa.gov).

Information provided by NASA.

Read More: <https://bit.ly/40dPDhj>

## American Relief Act Secures Extension, Additional Funding for Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project

WINDOW ROCK, AZ – This week, the U.S. Senate voted 85 in favor and 11 opposed to pass the American Relief Act, a stopgap funding bill, to avert a federal government shutdown. The bill, which provides short-term funding for the federal government through March 14, 2025, also includes a one-year extension and increase in funding for the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project (NGWSP).

The American Relief Act includes a crucial one-year extension for the NGWSP, as well as an increase in appropriations from \$870 million to \$1.6 billion.

"We are grateful to Congress and President Biden for securing additional funding for the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project, a key initiative that has brought water access to many Navajo people," said Navajo Nation Speaker Crystalyn Curley. "The additional funding and the one-year extension ensures that many more families will soon have running water in their homes."

Speaker Curley also thanked past Navajo leaders who secured the NGWSP years ago through a comprehensive

water rights settlement in New Mexico, as well as U.S. Sen. Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernandez, and others for securing the additional funding.

The NGWSP was first authorized in 2009 by President Obama, as part of the Navajo Nation San Juan River Basin Water Rights Settlement between the Navajo Nation, New Mexico, and the United States.

This funding boost is vital to keeping the NGWSP on track, which is central to efforts to combat water scarcity in the Navajo Nation, where many families still lack reliable access to clean, safe water.

In October 2023, the Navajo Nation Council unanimously passed a legislation, sponsored by Navajo Nation Council Delegate Danny Simpson, supporting the extension and additional funding for the project.

Since then, Speaker Curley and members of the 25th



Navajo Nation Council, along with Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren, have met with congressional members on numerous occasions to advocate for the project.

READ MORE: <https://bit.ly/3BZ7FdS>



# Bulletin Board

## Canyon de Chelly will become latest national park unit to ban commercial air tours

Commercial air tours will soon be prohibited over Canyon de Chelly National Monument in northeastern Arizona under a plan approved this week by the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Park Service

AP Dec 20, 2024  
Navajo-Hopi Observer

**CANYON DE CHELLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT, Ariz.** — Commercial air tours will soon be prohibited over Canyon de Chelly National Monument in northeastern Arizona under a plan approved last week by the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Park Service.

The park service said in a statement that the plan was signed Dec. 19 and will take effect in 180 days, barring any legal challenges. It will ban the tours over the park and within a half mile outside its boundary.

“Prohibiting commercial air tours protects these lands’ cultural and spiritual significance to the Navajo Nation,” said park Superintendent Lyn Carranza. “Canyon de Chelly National Monument’s Air Tour Management Plan honors the unique nation-to-nation relationship regarding decisions affecting the park and helps to preserve one of the most important archeological landscapes in the southwest.”

**What is Canyon de Chelly National Monument?**

The park lies within the Four Corners region inside the Navajo Nation and is among the most visited national monuments in the United States. It’s known for its soaring sandstone cliffs and 800-foot high Spider Rock spire. Prehistoric rock art is found throughout the area, which has been home to Native Americans for millennia.

**What’s the history of air tours at U.S. national parks and monuments?**

The sightseeing flights reportedly date back to the 1930s, when crews building the Hoover Dam on the Arizona-Nevada border asked helicopter pilots working on the project to give flyovers to their families.

The tours offering a unique overhead view of spectacular landscapes have long been popular at Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona. Some of the nation’s busiest spots for tour operators have included Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, which is



home to one of the world’s most active volcanoes, and Haleakala National Park.

**What are some objections to the tours?**

Supporters of the tours say they offer an exciting experience to tourists and allow older people and those with disabilities to see and enjoy the parks. Critics say the flights are an unnecessarily dangerous way to view some of the most stunning public lands in the United States.

Rules designating routes and minimum altitudes were set in 1986 after two tour aircraft collided over the Grand Canyon, killing 25 people. Still, there are currently numerous options for helicopter tours to the Grand Canyon, departing from places including Las Vegas and Sedona, Arizona.

Critics also complain that the buzz of helicopters drowns out the sounds of nature, disrupting the experiences of visitors on the ground and tribal members who call the land around the parks home.

**What regulations exist to manage the tours?**

The park service works with the FAA to implement the National Park Air Tour

Management Act of 2000, which requires tour operators who want to conduct such commercial air tours to get FAA approval. The law also requires the FAA, in conjunction with the park service, to establish management plans for air tours for those parks and nearby tribal lands where applications are made.

**What other parks have air tour regulations?**

Canyon de Chelly is the last of roughly two dozen national park units where the group Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility had fought for flyover restrictions.

Other national parks where such commercial flyovers essentially are or will be banned in coming years include Badlands National Park and Mount Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota, Glacier National Park in Montana, and Bandelier National Monument in New Mexico. Only two air tours per year are allowed at Death Valley National Park along the California-Nevada border.

Read more at: <https://bit.ly/4iVgZAi>



## PERSONNEL NEWS -- DCD OPEN POSITIONS

POSITION TITLE	LOCATION	PAY RATE	CLOSING DATE
<b>DCD Administration</b>			
Senior Accountant (S)	Window Rock, AZ	\$56,000.16	1/3/2025
Deputy Division Director (S)	Window Rock, AZ	\$85,712.40	1/6/2025
<b>Administrative Service Centers</b>			
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Torreon, NM	\$31,257.36	1/02/202
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Sawmill, AZ	\$31,257.36	12/31/2024
Accounts Maintenance Specialist (S)	Red Lake, AZ	\$31,257.36	1/02/2025
<b>Community Housing and Infrastructure Department</b>			
Administrative Assistant (S)	Window Rock, AZ	\$44,098.56	1/2/2025
<b>Navajo Nation Addressing Authority</b>			
Rural Addressing/GIS Technician	Window Rock, AZ	\$44,098.56	1/6/2025

(OUF) Open Until Filled  
 (S) Sensitive Position (subject to background check)

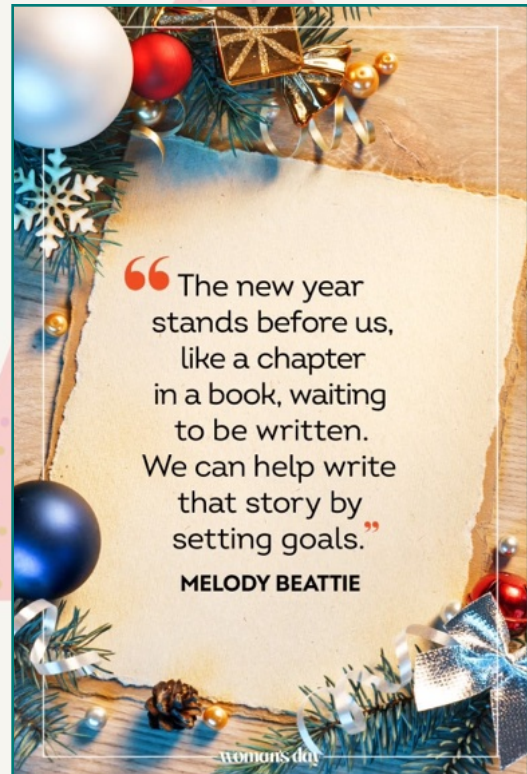
Closing Dates may change

For the most up-to-date personnel info, please visit DPM's website at  
<https://apply.navajo-nsn.gov/>

### Comic of the Month



### Quote of the Month





## U.S. Population Projected to Reach 341,145,670 at Midnight EST on January 1

December 30, 2024

Written by:

Diana M. Rodriguez

As 2024 comes to a close, the U.S. Census Bureau projects the U.S. population will be 341,145,670 on New Year's Day, an annual increase of 2,640,171 or 0.78%.

By comparison, just before the nation's independence nearly 250 years ago, the 13 colonies had about 2.5 million residents.

The projected world population on January 1, 2025, is 8,092,034,511, up 71,178,087 (0.89%) from New Year's Day 2024. During January 2025, 4.2 births and 2.0 deaths are expected worldwide every second.

### Population Estimates From U.S. and World Population Clocks

The Census Bureau's Population Clock displays simulated real-time growth of the U.S. and world populations. The U.S. Population Clock shows the population by age (0 to 100+) and sex, as well as the highest-density states, counties and cities.

In January 2025, the United States is expected to experience one birth every 9.0 seconds and one death every 9.4 seconds. Net international migration is expected to add one person to the U.S. population every 23.2 seconds.

The combination of births, deaths and net international migration increases the U.S. population by one person every 21.2 seconds.

The World Population Clock shows the most populous countries and the top U.S. export and import partners.

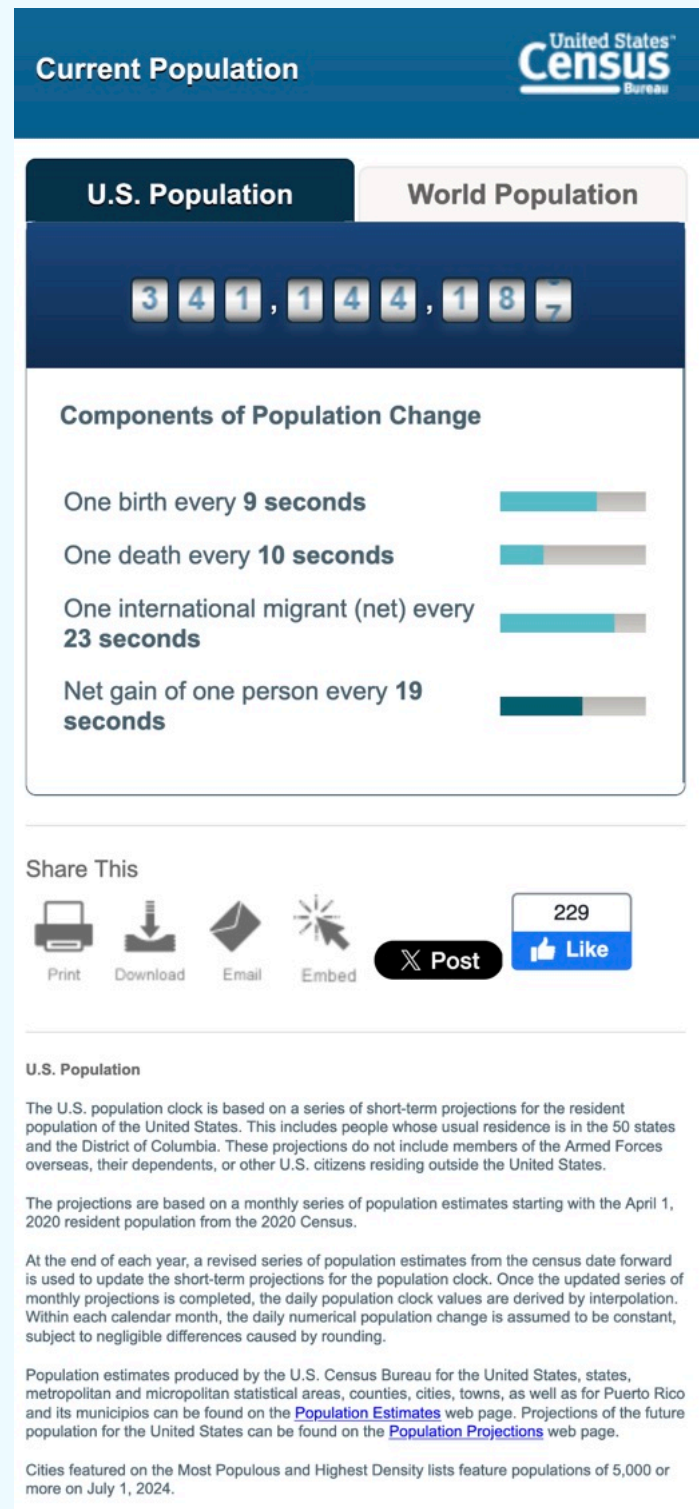
### How Does the Census Bureau Population Clock Work?

At the end of each year, the Census Bureau uses a revised series of population estimates to update the short-term projections for the population clock.

Once the updated monthly projections are completed, daily population clock values are derived by interpolation.

Within each calendar month, the daily numerical population change is assumed to be constant, subject to negligible differences caused by rounding.

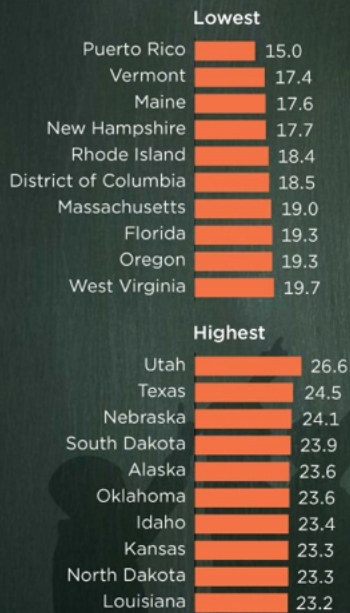
READ MORE AT: <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2024/12/new-year-population.html>





# United States and World Child Populations

## States and State Equivalents With the Lowest and Highest Child Population Percentages



## Countries and Areas With the Lowest and Highest Child Population Percentages



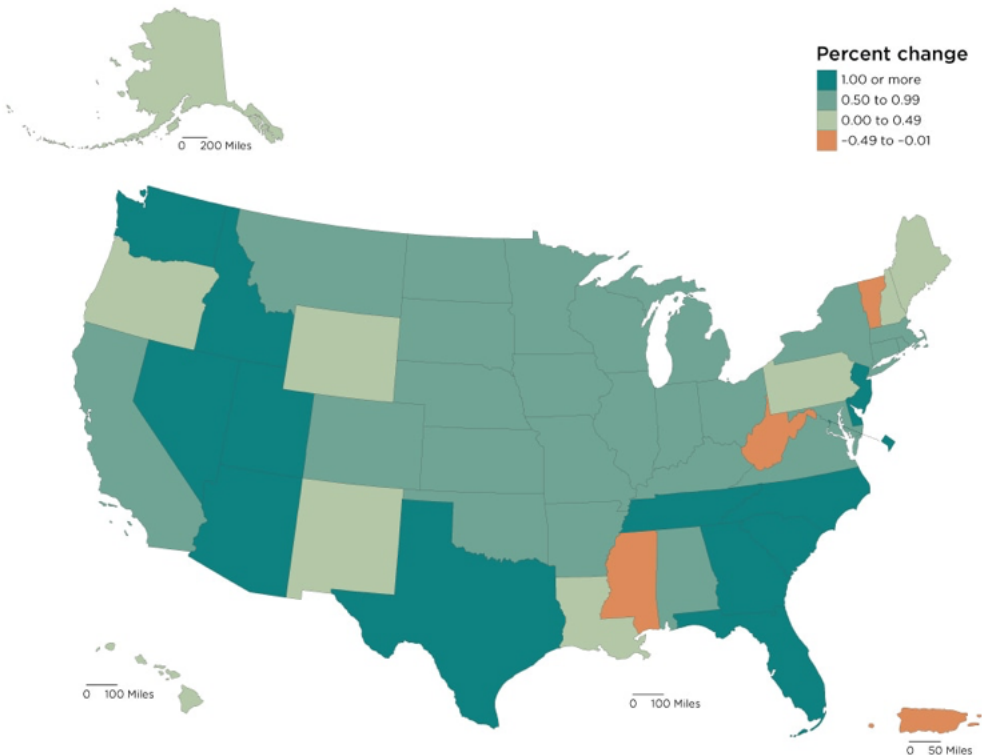
Percentage of the Population Under Age 18  
**United States: 21.5%**

Percentage of the Population Under Age 18  
**World: 29.4%**

Note: Population estimates as of July 1, 2024.

## Percent Change in State Population

July 1, 2023, to July 1, 2024







# 2025 New Year's Day

**U.S. population**  
341,145,670

**World population**  
8,092,034,511

United States®  
**Census**  
Bureau

U.S. Department of Commerce  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU  
[census.gov](https://www.census.gov)

Note: Population estimates as of January 1, 2025.  
Source: Vintage 2024 Population Estimates and  
International Database



# Protect Your Email – Safeguard Your Community

## A Warning to Navajo Nation Chapters: Keep Your Email Passwords Safe



### Did You Know?

Sharing your email password—even with someone you trust—can lead to serious risks for you, your chapter, and the Navajo Nation. Bad actors can exploit shared or stolen passwords to gain unauthorized access, causing harm to your operations and community.



### The Dangers of Sharing Passwords

- **Unauthorized Access:** If your password falls into the wrong hands, someone could access your sensitive emails and misuse them.
- **Data Theft:** Critical chapter information could be stolen, exposing financial, operational, and personal data to criminals.
- **Impersonation:** Hackers can use your account to send harmful messages, scams, or misinformation, damaging your reputation and trust.
- **Community Impact:** A breach of one chapter email account could impact the entire chapter's operations and resources.



### Real Consequences Include:

- **Financial Loss:** Fraudsters can manipulate email accounts to divert funds or steal donations.
- **Disruption of Services:** Hackers can lock you out of your account, halting critical communication and services.
- **Legal Troubles:** Mishandling sensitive information could result in compliance issues or penalties.



### If You Think Your Account Has Been Compromised:

1. Change your password immediately.
2. Notify your chapter leadership and DCD IT support.
3. Review recent activity in your account for suspicious actions.



### How to Protect Your Email Account

- **Never Share Your Password:** Your password is for you alone. Sharing it—even with colleagues—creates unnecessary risks.
- **Use Strong Passwords:** Create a unique password with a mix of letters, numbers, and special characters. Avoid using personal information like your birthday.
- **Enable Two-Factor Authentication (2FA):** Add an extra layer of protection to your account. 2FA ensures only you can access your email, even if someone knows your password.
- **Watch for Scams:** Don't fall for phishing emails asking for your password or personal information. Legitimate organizations will never ask you for your password.



### Stay Vigilant, Stay Safe

- Your email is a gateway to sensitive information. Protect it to protect your chapter and the Navajo Nation.
- For questions or help with email security, contact the Division of Community Development IT or your chapter's tech support, if available.

**Together, we can keep our community safe from cyber threats. Don't let your guard down--secure your email today!**



Division of  
Community  
Development



# December 2024



The DCD Newsletter, "Community Info", is produced monthly by the Division of Community Development and is a resource for division staff and chapters.

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