

Project(s) Narrative

Background

Under the authority of the Osage Nation constitution, and in the interest of the Osage people and public, Chief Standing Bear declared a Public Health State of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic that is happening in the world today. The Pandemic has the potential to cause widespread illness and death. Planning and preparedness before the next pandemic strikes are critical for an effective response. The increased demand for health care services during a pandemic will challenge existing health care services in Osage Nation to a level not previously experienced. A pandemic like this will require a sustained health response for months or possibly even years.

Planning for this kind of sustained response presents a unique challenge to health facilities, health care providers, and Health Administration. This pandemic plan will require collaboration and integration among all ON Departments/Programs during all phases of the project. Prior to and at the emergence of a pandemic, efforts must be made to identify populations with special needs as well as mechanisms to ensure their receipt of services.

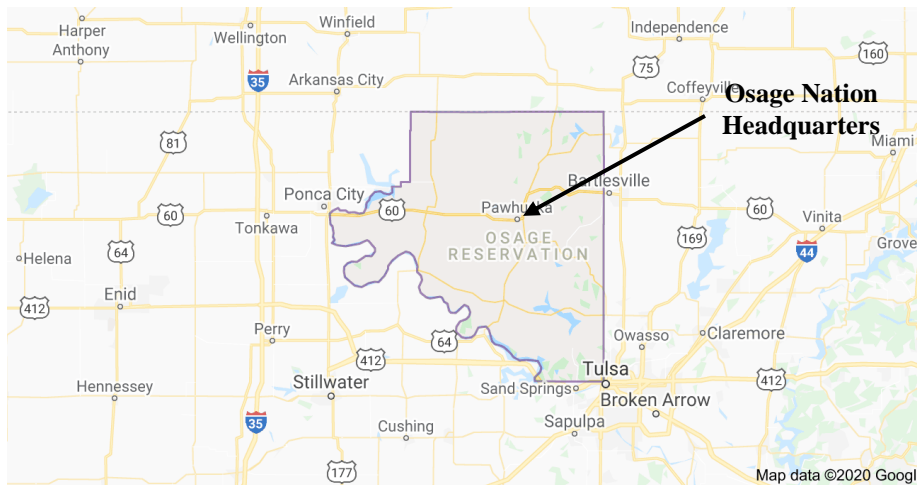
Before the pandemic, Oklahoma ranked 10th in the nation for food insecurity. Food security for the Osage Nation is a top priority. Osages and non-Osages alike have experienced a sudden loss of income due to COVID-19. At the same time, the disruption of the economic order has caused a surge in food prices. For many, meat is too expensive, if it is even available. Grocery stores often are out of meat and other basic food staples, or there is a limit to how much one can buy. There are lines at food donation centers. Local meat processors are unable to take further orders for months. The service area in which Osage Nation operates was already a food desert, and COVID-19 has only exacerbated the situation. Food security is tied directly to the health and safety of our people.

This state of emergency exists within the territory of the Nation, which extends overall all persons, subjects, property, and activities occurring within the territory of the Osage Nation and over all Osage citizens, subjects, property, and activities outside such territory affecting the rights and laws of the Nation. Thus, because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Osage Nation leadership took measures to address the community and staff to respond, prepare, and prevent further contamination:

- March 20, 2020 - Osage Nation employees were directed to restrict travel.
- March 16, 2020 - Executive Order 20-02 activating the Osage Nation Pandemic Prevention and Recovery Process Protocol was issued, and procedures were implemented for employees to work from home.
- March 17, 2020 - Osage Nation schools were closed.
- March 18, 2020 - Osage Casinos were closed, and throughout the government of the Osage Nation, restrictions to public access were placed into protocols department-by-department and building-by-building.

- March 18, 2020 - Chief Standing Bear was informed the Wah-Zha-Zhe Health Center is facing a critical shortage of COVID-19 test kits; that the confirmation of COVID-19 illness in a person or whether a person has been exposed and is contagious, cannot be determined without a COVID-19 test; and therefore, the number of persons who may become ill with the COVID-19 cannot be reasonably ascertained at this time.
- March 18, 2020 - Chief Standing Bear and his office participated in The White House Indian Country COVID-19 Conference Call and will continue to receive updates from the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of the Interior, Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Education, Department of Agriculture, and the National Indian Gaming Commission.

The suspension of gaming and hotel operations of the Osage Nation has immediate, irreparable, and potentially catastrophic effects on the financial condition, employment status, health care,



education, food distribution, and welfare of the people within the territory of the Osage Nation. This immediate crisis requires the Nation's full focus on prevention, preparing, and responding to this pandemic to protect and preserve Osage's lives in and outside the community. The

economic recovery can begin once we know our tribal citizens are safe.

The Osage Nation is a federally recognized tribal government headquartered in Pawhuska, Oklahoma, with a population close to 22,000 tribal members. The Osage Nation is a sovereign nation with tribal jurisdiction over the Osage reservation, which is more than 2,200 square miles and embodies a rural area deep within the plains of Osage County (the largest county in Oklahoma). The current governing body of the Osage Nation contains three separate branches - an executive, a judicial and legislative branch. Osage Nation tribal members live inside and outside the reservation area within the state of Oklahoma and beyond. In addition, there are nearly 3,000 Native Americans from other federally recognized tribes who reside within the Osage Nation service area, who qualify for Osage Nation services.

Principal Chief, Geoffrey Standing Bear and his executive staff lead the executive branch. The Osage Nation has a 25-year vision, which involves advocating and bolstering the ongoing development of health and wellness services that promote tribal member well-being and vitality. The Osage Nation has identified health as a top strategic priority that focuses on access to quality health care, where it is affordable and comprehensive.

Simultaneously, the Osage Nation's COVID-19 action plan represents further strategic focuses that align with the Supporting Tribal Public Health Capacity in Coronavirus Preparedness and Response funding opportunity for which provides emergency funding that aims to strengthen the preparedness and response capabilities of tribal nations in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The current COVID-19 pandemic constitutes a public health emergency that includes the Osage Nation and its service area. The Wah-Zha-Zhe Health Center (WHC) is at the heart of the Nation's health care initiatives and is located on the Osage Nation Campus in Pawhuska, OK. The health center is managed under the direction of Dr. Ron Shaw and is overseen by the Osage Nation Health Authority (ONHA) Board. The health center's service area is far-reaching, especially since the clinic opens medical services up to all federally recognized tribal affiliations. This inclusive approach means that patients near and far can take advantage of services when and if needed. The health center and the Osage Nation government are aligned in their vision to afford patients a robust and culturally sensitive healthcare system that transforms the health of the communities served and provides Native American families with the health care they can depend on for their overall well-being and safety. Therefore, it is essential for the Wah-Zha-Zhe Health Center to carry out public health emergency response activities to respond appropriately to the current Covid-19 Pandemic within the Osage Nation service area.

- *Purpose*

This narrative aligns with the Final Implementation Plan developed by the Osage Nation COVID Task Force (ONCTF). The CARES Act funds will be used to cover costs that-

- 1) Are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19);
- 2) Were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020 (the date of enactment of the CARES Act) for the State or government; and
- 3) Were incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020, and ends on December 30, 2020.

- *Outcomes*

This funding may not bring the Osage Nation back to optimal operational status, but it will reduce the negative effects that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused.

- *Strategies and Activities*

The task force identified several project areas that can utilize the funds in an expedient and efficient manner:

1. Payments to individual Osages who have experienced documented COVID-19-related losses
2. Payments to Osage-owned or operated (51% or greater) who have experienced documented COVID-19-related losses
3. Audio/Video Equipment Upgrade Project Charter Distance Learning Project Group
4. Pawhuska Area Broadband Design Project

5. Osage Ranch
6. Osage Nation Emergency Management
7. Cyber Security Infrastructure Assessment
8. Data Center Project
9. Electronic Document Control
10. Bird Creek Farm Equipment Acquisition
11. Financial Assistance
12. Meat Processing Plant
13. Mobile Hot Spots
14. Judicial
15. Member Web Portal
16. Osage Home Health Indigent Care Program
17. Pawhuska Community Broadband Expansion Phase 1
18. Pawhuska Community Broadband Expansion Design
19. Portable Computer Inventory Expansion
20. Thermal Camera Check Stations
21. Virtual Desktop Technology (VDT) Expansion
22. Tribal Works
23. Legislative Supplies
24. WZZHC Equipment and Supplies

Additional funds will be held in contingency.

Organizational Capacity

The Osage Nation is a federally recognized American Indian Tribe with its tribal government offices located in Pawhuska, Osage County, Oklahoma. In 2004, the Osage Nation became a sovereign nation and in 2006 adopted a constitution establishing a tripartite form of government with three separate branches: Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. Principal Chief Geoffrey Standing Bear serves as the supreme executive power of the Osage Nation. All administrative offices, departments, agencies and instrumentalities of the Osage Nation, including but not limited to, public trusts, boards, village committees, authorities and committees operate in the Executive Branch.

It is the responsibility of the Osage Nation Congress to adopt a system of laws that promote the health, education and well-being of the Osage Citizens; preserve the checks and balance of the government by the independent exercise of legislative powers; carry out oversight responsibilities to enhance government accountability; encourage and support the raising of tribal revenues and to appropriate monies that support necessary government services, and preserve and protect the Osage Nation's environment.

The Osage Nation's Fiscal Department is led by the Treasurer and is composed of Accounting, Procurement, and Properties. This Department is responsible for ensuring fiscal policy and financial accountability in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Standards (GAAP), Osage Nation Accounting Policies, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The Accounting Department encompasses a wide range of functions which include financial reporting to federal agencies; contact and compilation of records for the external auditors; preparing and presenting financial information, accounts

receivable and payable for the various branches of the Osage Nation for federal and tribal programs; procurement; payroll; management of the physical assets of the Osage Nation; management of travel requirements; and employee loans.

Over 30 programs serve the Osage Nation. They include direct service programs addressing the health and well-being of all our Osage Citizens; education and early learning for our Osage children; cultural preservation; and issues involving land management, commerce and public safety. The Osage Nation manages approximately \$30 million per year in federal awards. The financial policies and procedures are designed to ensure compliance with all applicable regulations. Specific duties related to the financial management of a federal grant are as follows:

Treasurer (Jim Littleton)

- Leads the Osage Nation Treasury Department and is accountable to the Executive Branch and the Osage Nation Congress
- Responsible for ensuring the department follows all federal accounting procedures
- Provides oversight to all federal awards by making sure budgets are submitted to the Osage Nation Congress for appropriation prior to implementation
- Ensures an accountant is assigned to a particular grant for all financial reports to the program and the funding agency
- Responsible for responding to all audit or agency site visit findings and corrective actions
- Works closely with division leaders, program departmental directors, grants, and compliance (which has oversight for grant contract and compliance management in responding to audit findings).

Accountant(s) (will be assigned)

- Responsible for monitoring the budget for this project, including, but not limited to, inspecting invoices to ensure alignment with the appropriate project budget and contract requirements
- Alerting the Program Director of any discrepancies, and approve/forward documents for payment
- Responsible for all grant financial reports for the Program Director and funding agency

Procurement is also a function of the Osage Nation Treasury. The Procurement office is responsible for coordinating all procurement activity in accordance with applicable policies, Osage Nation law, and federal procurement regulations. The procurement department consists of a Procurement Officer and two purchasing agents who report to the Treasurer.

The Grants and Compliance Departments are responsible for oversight of the grant lifecycle, which includes implementation, reporting, compliance and closeout procedures. Oversight for the duties of this department includes the Grants Director and Compliance Director.