

2009 State-Tribal Leaders Summit

Issues and Proposed Solutions Regarding Tribal Infrastructure

The following issues and proposed solutions were identified and put in order of priority by the 2009 State-Tribal Leadership Summit Planning Committee based on input from all 22 tribes, nations and pueblos. The Committee is comprised of representatives from eight of the tribes, nations and pueblos. These will be the core issues and solutions presented to and discussed with Governor Richardson at the upcoming 2009 State-Tribal Leaders Summit on May 5, 2009.

Problem Statement: Tribes, nations and pueblos in New Mexico have inadequate and antiquated infrastructure and lack sufficient resources to plan, design, and construct infrastructure. The absence of such infrastructure affects the ability of Native American communities to improve educational performance, attract and retain economic development ventures, and achieve acceptable standards of healthcare and quality of life. The Tribal Infrastructure Fund, while beneficial, is not a reliable source of funding because there is no certainty that it will be funded from year to year and the amounts appropriated to the TIF are far below the actual need. In addition, tribes cannot fully benefit from other established funding streams because of state matching requirements. Finally, though funding is available to address tribal infrastructure needs from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) many tribes are struggling with how to access these funds.

Solution #1: Support legislation to dedicate a percentage of annual tribal gaming revenues from the General Fund to establish a permanent funding stream to the Tribal Infrastructure Trust Fund.

Solution #2: Adopt policy or support legislation to waive matching requirements for tribal governments for infrastructure grants through state agencies and entities, including through the New Mexico Finance Authority.

Solution #3: Explain how the State of New Mexico will coordinate with tribal governments to ensure they receive ARRA funding.