

# SITKA TRIBE OF ALASKA PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release



**Sitka Tribe of Alaska to provide financial assistance to Tribal citizens/households, laptops/iPads to tribal children enrolled in the Sitka School District, iPads to elders to help with connectivity, upgrade tribal facilities health and safety systems in multiple facilities, and provide financial assistance to non-profits that provide services to tribal citizens with COVID-19 funding**

Sitka, AK (06/22/2020) – On June 17, 2020, the Sitka Tribe of Alaska (STA) Tribal Council approved the budgets designed to mitigate the effects of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. STA recognizes all tribal citizens and their families have been negatively impacted in one way or another. Citizens must apply for the assistance detailed below, provide updated contact information for enrollment records, and certify you were impacted by COVID-19 to receive assistance.

**Financial Assistance to Tribal citizens/households:** STA will provide a one-time cash payment of \$250 to all tribal citizens enrolled in STA as of June 17, 2020, the “tribal citizen of record” date established by the Council with approval of the budgets. Every citizen is eligible for this payment regardless of residency or age.

Tribal households in Sitka will also be eligible to receive an *additional* one-time payment of \$1500.00. The Council strongly encourages utilizing all assistance you receive for your rent/mortgage, utilities, heating fuel or groceries. Tribal citizens who reside in households outside of Sitka are eligible to apply for up to \$500 in *additional* assistance through the Social Services department, see more details below. Tribal household means at least one enrolled citizen resides in the home. All additional assistance is limited to one payment **per household** paid to the head of the household you designate on your application. Please submit all applications for all citizens in your household at the same time.

Lisa Gassman, STA General Manager indicated “Starting on June 24, 2020 a **Cares Act Financial Assistance Application** will be available online at [www.sitkatribes.org](http://www.sitkatribes.org), outside the front door of the STA administration building located at 456 Katlian Street, and at our Social Services building located at 204 Siginaka Way. To request an application via fax or email please call 907-747-3207. Completed applications can be scanned and emailed to [cares@sitkatribes-nun.gov](mailto:cares@sitkatribes-nun.gov), mailed to 456 Katlian Street, or faxed to 907-747-4915. Elders or citizens needing assistance completing the application are encouraged to call 907-747-3207 to make an appointment to meet with staff to obtain assistance in filling out your application. **The deadline to apply for the direct payments is September 30, 2020.** The sooner applications are in the better, as STA is required to a large portion of the COVID-19 money by December 30, 2020.”

Gassman further stated “Checks will be processed and mailed as applications are received.” She is asking tribal citizens to please plan on at least three (3) weeks from the date an application is submitted for it to be processed and mailed. Checks will be mailed to the mailing address detailed on the application. STA will enter the address you provide on your application in our enrollment records if that conflicts with the information we currently have. If a citizen indicates that they resided in a household in Sitka, prior to June 17, 2020, and that information is different than what we currently have in our enrollment records, proof of residency in Sitka must be provided with the Cares Act Financial Assistance application. Proof can include a

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copy of government issued driver license or ID card, a lease for an apartment/mortgage statement, a copy of a utility bill, fuel bill, or bank/credit card statement that details a physical residence address in Sitka prior to June 17, 2020.

**STA will also assist provide the following assistance utilizing Cares Act funding:**

**Cultural Resources, Education and Employment Department-** *A separate application will be required to receive the following assistance.*

- \$823,021 for:
  - Laptops/iPads for enrolled tribal children in the Sitka School District (working in conjunction with the Sitka School District),
  - iPads for elders residing in Sitka,
  - partnering to continue the Summer Foods Program for children as the Sitka School District stops (July 1 – August 31),
  - providing laptops for all college students currently funded by STA with a STA Higher Education/AVT scholarship.

**Social Services Department-** *Separate applications will be required to receive the following assistance.*

- A total of:
  - \$500 in additional assistance for households that reside outside of Sitka (\$225,000),
  - \$135,230 in additional low-income home energy assistance, community services block grant, childcare development fund, and welfare assistance (the eligibility requirements are the same as our usual programs for this funding)
  - \$100,000 for additional funeral expenses assistance
  - \$28,000 for additional food pantry assistance

**Facilities:**

- \$2,100,000 for necessary health and safety upgrades to multiple tribal buildings

**Other donations to be provided:**

- \$200,000 to Non-Profits in Sitka that provide services to citizens

KathyHope Erickson, Tribal Chairman requests tribal citizens review the local newspaper, the STA webpage, or the STA Facebook page regularly for additional information on accessing the assistance available. “The Council is happy to be able to provide assistance to all of our citizens, we recognize times are hard, we hope all are staying safe and well.”

Finally, Gassman wants tribal citizens to know “The Council has not allocated all of the Cares Act funding received at this time. There remains up to \$775,000 to allocate. We have reserved these funds in the event we receive a lot of updated address/contact information for citizens and need to allocate additional funds for the direct financial assistance we are providing. In the event the funds do remain available to allocate, we would like to hear from tribal citizens with ideas on how to allocate that funding. Please send your suggestion to [cares@sitkatriben-sn.gov](mailto:cares@sitkatriben-sn.gov).”

For more information contact Lisa Gassman at [lisa.gassman@sitkatriben-sn.gov](mailto:lisa.gassman@sitkatriben-sn.gov) or (907) 747 -7380.