Through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) and American Rescue Plan (ARP), Northwest Indian College received urgently needed funding to immediately transition to online learning platforms, modify campuses for health and safety concerns, and address the digital divide challenges in Indian Country. Our students received emergency grants, tuition assistance, discharge of student debt and increased internet access to help them stay enrolled in courses. As we continue to support students during this difficult time and develop a plan to “return to normal,” TCUs need your continued support to address ongoing and increasing needs.

117TH CONGRESS-2ND SESSION MARCH 2022

NORTHWEST INDIAN COLLEGE OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

- Emergency Student Aid Total: $990,000 (FY 2022 7/1/21-6/30/22)
- IT Upgrades: New servers, internet hotspots, video conferencing equipment
- Health & Safety: custodians, cleaning supplies, improved air quality, HR Covid safety
- Campus Modifications: security upgrades, hands-free fixtures, social distancing measures
- Professional Training: distance education delivery, mental health first aid & cyber security
- Inflation: increased cost in building materials for modular classroom and office building

Over the past two years Northwest Indian College has quickly adapted to virtual learning. An instructional designer position was created to develop delivery of distance education. Campus wide IT equipment was upgraded to improve capacity. Our extended campuses converted to distance learning, with updates to student computer labs, staff desktops, and improved video conference equipment. Additional academic advising support.

NORTHWEST INDIAN COLLEGE FUNDING PRIORITIES

This is a breakdown of spending percentages as of February 2022. The pie chart is a snapshot of spending trend so far and will change.
BROADBAND & IT CHALLENGES

- Distance delivery of education requires increased cyber security
- NWIC required increased server storage capacity to meet the demands of delivering distance education
- Many NWIC students did not have adequate home internet access in rural areas or on tribal reservations
- NWIC students, staff, and faculty required both significant hardware and software upgrades to work remotely and attend classes

REQUEST: $40 MILLION TCU IT SERVICE FUND: USDA – RURAL UTILITY SERVICE

The ongoing pandemic has exacerbated the digital divide and underscored the lack of broadband access across Indian Country. To address these deficiencies that could leave Indian Country – and AI/AN students – behind the rest of the U.S. for generations, Congress must act to establish a permanent TCU IT Service Fund within the USDA-Rural Utilities Service Program. An annual $40 million set-aside for TCUs, which are 1994 land-grant institutions served by USDA, would help cover rapidly increasing network, connectivity, and equipment costs, maintenance, infrastructure expansion, and IT staffing.

Congress recognized this need in the pandemic and attempted to provide support to TCUs by including them in the new NTIA Tribal Connectivity Broadband program. Unfortunately, due to NTIA’s design of the program, to date, not even one TCU has been awarded direct grants.

FACILITIES, MAINTENANCE, REHABILITATION

Social distancing required significant expansion of facilities to provide safe separation of students and staff during the pandemic. Modular classrooms and offices were funded to meet this need at NWIC.

REQUEST: $3.2 BILLION TCU CONSTRUCTION FUND: DOI – BUREAU OF INDIAN EDUCATION

A July 2021 AIHEC survey of TCUs revealed many chronic unmet facilities and infrastructure needs, including lack of student and faculty housing, inadequate classroom space, insufficient libraries, and outdated laboratories.
- TCU deferred maintenance/rehabilitation: $400 million (total)
- TCU completion of master plans: $2.7 billion (total)
- TCU operation and maintenance: $20 million (annual, recurring need)

AIHEC strongly urges Congress to fund dedicated TCU facilities programs through DOI-BIE to modernize current facilities and build safer 21st century campuses. If new construction were an allowable expense, many of our campus development needs could be safely addressed beyond the use of modular buildings.

NW INDIAN COLLEGE II

72’ x 40’ MODULAR OFFICE

- The new Office building consists of 10 offices, a conference room and a staff break room.
- The new Classroom building consists of 4 classrooms, restrooms, and a service area.
- Air quality and ventilation upgrades to existing campus buildings.

Wellness Support for Students & Staff

Marilene Silva (Kaikoxi Surana) is an Indigenous mental health provider. Originally from Brazil, an is an enrolled member of the Macuxi Tribe in the Amazon region.

Services Provided

- One on One counseling
- Family counseling staff & students
- Anxiety weekly workshop

Wellness Team

- Wellness kits for students
- Care packages for staff
- Wellness activities
- Information on resources
- Distributes games and craft kits
- Staff in-service healing circle

Student Connections

The Students Connections program was developed through CARES funding to assist with the challenges of switching to virtual learning. Student Connections promotes the following services:

- Academic Coaching
- Persistence
- Retention
- Graduation
- Holistic Connection
- Peer Mentoring

Hy’shq for the continued support