The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development and the Native Nations Institute at the University of Arizona release new research in two Policy Briefs

July 24, 2020, Cambridge, MA – A team of researchers from Harvard University and the University of Arizona today released two policy briefs in their research series aimed at assisting tribal nations navigate the COVID-19 crisis, strengthen their governments, and emerge stronger than before.

Policy Brief No. 4: Emerging Stronger than Before: Guidelines for the Federal Role in American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes’ Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic

The recent CARES Act acknowledged that the 574 federally recognized tribes carry responsibilities which mirror those of state and local governments. Like their state and local counterparts, tribes must continue to receive significant additional support to aid in their efforts to respond to and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. As Congress crafts its next round of legislation, it is imperative to consider whether and how the current crisis in Native America can be turned into an opportunity for tribes to emerge from the pandemic with greater cultural strength and community wellbeing, and with more robust and resilient economies and governments. If such goals are to be realized, the researchers argue that the most-needed federal actions are an expansion of tribal control over tribal affairs and territories and increased funding for key investments in tribal communities. Specifically, they urge the (1) expansion of tribal control and jurisdiction of tribal affairs and
territories and (2) increased federal funding for tribal governments, infrastructure, and education.

**Policy Brief No. 5: Federal COVID-19 Response Funding for Tribal Governments: Lessons from the CARES Act**

Congress is now considering legislation that will bring another round of pandemic-related funding to tribes. To maximize positive outcomes in Indian Country and save the federal government the expense, delay, and frustration of litigation, this effort will be enhanced by focusing attention on the lessons learned from the CARES Act. The researchers find that three key lessons provide recommendations for the next round of legislation: (1) replace the tribal on-reservation population measure employed in the original CARES Act allocation formula with a measure of the total number of tribal citizens; (2) permit tribes’ greater leeway in the timeframe over which relief funds are to be spent; and, (3) allow tribal governments extensive flexibility in their use of COVID-19 relief funds.

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The studies’ findings are available [here](Policy Brief No. 4) and [here](Policy Brief No. 5). For further information, contact the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development at 617-496-4229 or [hpaied@hks.harvard.edu](mailto:hpaied@hks.harvard.edu).
The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development is based in the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. The Harvard Project aims to understand and foster the conditions under which sustained social and economic development is achieved among Indigenous nations in the US and beyond.

The Native Nations Institute at the University of Arizona’s Udall Center for Public Policy is a self-determination and self-governance resource for Native nations, providing professional development, policy analysis, and research to Indigenous leaders, tribal governments, and their partners worldwide.

For more information about the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, you can go to www.hpaied.org

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