DATE:       July 17, 2023
TO:         California Tribes;
FROM:       Gregory W. Gehr, CEO NCIDC
Re:         Extreme Heat Events

The purpose of this message is to highlight ways that the California American Indian Community Services Block Grant Network can assist in mitigating heat stress for vulnerable Native populations impacted by recent heat waves. During this past week, more than 100 million people across the country—almost one-third of the U.S. population—were under excessive heat warnings or heat advisories, including many reservations, rancherias, and Indian communities within California.

The climate crisis is making heat waves more intense and frequent, endangering communities and vulnerable households across the country. Native households are particularly at risk and are often unable to afford adequate air conditioning due to economic factors. This is exacerbated by the lack of places for Native community members to utilize trying to escape the heat.

Tribes who have a current CSBG contract have the flexibility to retarget CSBG funding to address the extreme heat event. This might be through the operation of a Tribal “cooling center” where people can come to get out of the heat during the day, or assistance to eligible CSBG clients with energy bill payments for those that cannot obtain assistance through existing LIHEAP programs.

If your Tribe would like to retarget your existing CSBG funding into a response to the extreme heat event we are currently experiencing, please contact Cheyanne Souza, Executive Assistant at NCIDC at Cheyanne@ncidc.org, or call at 707.445.8451, ext 12, and we will assist you with a simple one page request form so you can utilize your CSBG resources to facilitate your extreme heat event response.
Extreme Heat’s Impact on Health and Safety

Warmer temperatures increase the risk of a diverse range of negative health outcomes. When people are exposed to extreme heat, they can suffer from potentially fatal illnesses. Health risks include dehydration which can lead to blood pressure issues and kidney injury; heat exhaustion which can lead to heat stroke if not treated; and worsening asthma and chronic pulmonary disease.

We know that extreme heat kills more Americans than any other weather-related event, with approximately 700 deaths and 9,200 hospitalizations each year because of extreme heat. Additional populations that face more significant health risks from extreme heat include people who are elderly and live alone, have existing health conditions, have poor access to healthcare, live in rural areas, work outdoors, have low incomes, and live in deficient housing. Children are also particularly vulnerable to heat-related illness and death, as their bodies are less able to adapt to heat than adults, and they must rely on others to help keep them safe.

Follow these tips to stay safe during extreme heat events:

- **Stay cool.** Close shades, windows and blinds. Set air conditioners between 75 and 80 degrees. If air-conditioning isn’t available, find a local cooling center or other air-conditioned public space (libraries, shopping malls, community centers, etc.). Try to stay indoors and wear loose, light-colored, lightweight clothing. While spending time in the water is refreshing on hot summer days, many California rivers are running faster, while lakes are deeper and colder than they’ve been in recent years. This makes them more dangerous than normal, even for strong swimmers.
- **Stay hydrated.** Drink at least 2 cups of water every hour even if you’re not feeling thirsty. Avoid alcoholic or caffeinated drinks.
- **Look after each other.** Check in on friends and family, especially elderly relatives or neighbors. Call 911 if there are signs of high fever (103°F or higher) or in case of other emergencies.

Here are some additional resources to inform and protect your communities:

**US CDC Resources for Extreme Heat Events:**
Heat-related deaths and illnesses are preventable. Despite this fact, more than 600 people in the United States are killed by extreme heat every year. This website provides helpful tips, information, and resources to help you stay safe in the extreme heat this summer.
https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/index.html

**State of California Resources for Extreme Heat Events:**
In response to the extreme heat weather event, Governor Newsom launched the “Heat Ready CA” public awareness campaign and has increased coordination among state agencies and local partners to help protect Californians from the dangers of extreme heat events and to ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable populations. The “Heat Ready CA” campaign includes a multi-channel education and outreach effort, as well as a new website, HeatReadyCA.com, that offers tips and resources for Californians, including people most vulnerable to heat-related health concerns, such as older adults, people with disabilities and chronic conditions, pregnant individuals, young children, and those without access to air-conditioning or natural shade, among others.
https://heatreadyca.com/