



**FOR IMMEDIATE  
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### **Navajo Nation Presented with \$3 million in Funding for Shiprock Domestic Violence Shelter**

**Shiprock, New Mex.** - New Mexico Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernandez spoke at a private event hosted by the Navajo Division of Social Services (NDSS) to present the Navajo Nation with \$3 million from the 2022-23 Congressional Budget Bill.

The office of Congresswoman Leger Fernandez welcomed constituents and advocacy groups through the state of New Mexico to submit their requests for community project funding for Fiscal Year 2023. According to Leger Fernandez, this is a highly competitive process, only 15 requests were selected for submission to the Appropriations Committee for final approval.



*Pictured from left to right: DFS' Trudy Tsosie, Honorable Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty, Senator Shannon Pinto, Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernandez, NN Vice President Richelle Montoya, Shiprock Chapter President Nevina Kinlahcheeny.*

“I am honored to acknowledge the crucial work that is done here and that is done with so little. You (Northern T.R.E.E. House) have managed to serve so many who need protection and safety. You did that in a very small building and while covid raged. We know that the instances of domestic violence grew during that time and yet you stayed open. You figured out how to ensure safety and protection during those times. You showed strong community support, and because of that you were one of the 15 projects selected,” stated Leger Fernandez.

Navajo Nation Vice President, Richelle Montoya, the first Madame Vice President of the Navajo Nation, accepted the funds on behalf of the Navajo Nation and the NDSS’ Northern T.R.E.E. shelter.

Vice President Montoya expressed her gratitude to Senator Shannon Pinto, Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernandez, and Honorable Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty, and other distinguished guests for their collaborative efforts and teamwork, she also gave special thanks to Northern T.R.E.E. House Principal Victim and Witness Advocate, Trudy Tsosie, “Thank you Trudy

*The Navajo Division of Social Services (NDSS) is under the Executive Branch of the Navajo Nation's three-branch government. Under the leadership of the NDSS Executive Director, NDSS programs and departments provide social services and human services, consistent with professional social work ethics and values, and human services in accordance with Navajo cultural values to help reduce and alleviate hardship.*



The Navajo Nation  
Division of Social Services  
Office of the Executive Director

for standing strong and having the heart and mind to do what you were meant to do here on this earth.”

At the height of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, when stay-at-home orders potentially worsened the isolation of domestic violence victims, Tsosie had voluntarily elected to remain in the shelter with families while the NDSS made the decision to keep the shelter open despite the Navajo Nation government closure.

Honorable Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty, a long-time advocate for Navajo men, women, children, families, and elders who experience abuse and neglect stated, “When I first started this work Ms. Trudy Tsosie was one of my first educators on the ground with the women’s and children’s center. Eric was another (Eric Gale, Delegated Department Manager for the NDSS Department of Family Services) who demonstrated to Navajo leadership what human trafficking looked like on the Navajo Nation. These are visionary people who are on the ground. These are the people telling the stories that need to be heard. We have no control over law enforcement or judges. What we can do is bring advocacy. We can tell their story, and this is the result of all those conversations.”



*Pictured: Congress woman Teresa Leger Fernandez presents funds to NDSS Northern T.R.E.E. House.*

“Our job is to listen; the voices will tell us what we need to do and that is exactly what happened here. It was not my choosing, it was you sharing the need, collectively,” stated Leger Fernandez.

According to NDSS Executive Director, Thomas Cody, the funding will be used to renovate and expand the Northern T.R.E.E. House. A partnership with Utah Navajo Health System, who is currently managing the Gentle Iron Hawk Shelter, is also being initiated to help the NDSS expand victim advocacy for Shiprock and its surrounding communities.

If you or anyone you know is experiencing domestic violence, you can contact the Stronghearts Native Helpline at 1-844-762-8483 or at [www.strongheartshelpline.org](http://www.strongheartshelpline.org); the Family Crisis Center hotline, 24/7 at 505-564-9192, toll-free at 1-888-440-9194, or [familycrisiscenternm.org](http://familycrisiscenternm.org); the Family Harmony Program Crisis Hotline, 24/7 at 505-368-1157. In an emergency, call 911.

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