

**RAÚL M. GRIJALVA**  
7TH DISTRICT OF ARIZONA

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
RANKING MEMBER

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EARLY CHILDHOOD, ELEMENTARY, AND  
SECONDARY EDUCATION

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE  
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March 29, 2023

The Honorable David Joyce  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
H-307 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Henry Cuellar  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
1036 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Joyce and Ranking Member Cuellar,

I am requesting \$2,389,208 under the FY 24 Subcommittee on Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) - Emergency Operations Center (EOC) grant program for the Tohono O'odham Nation (Nation).

The Nation has an expansive land base and its capitol, Sells, is home to the Tohono O'odham Nation Fire Department (TONFD) and Tohono O'odham Nation Police Department (TOPD) headquarters. Sells is located more than 40 miles east of the western part of the Reservation, which creates significant challenges for timely emergency response to the western communities, as multiple low water crossings and washes on State Highway 86 between Sells and the western locations make the road impassable during annual weather events, further complicating emergency response. Flooding and monsoon events often result in extremely extended response times, as TONFD and TOPD have to reroute over 100 miles to reach western communities. This request would support the construction of the Western Police and Fire Substation/Regional Emergency Operations Center. This center would allow for the permanent base of operations for TONFD and TOPD and support direct first responder service to the Nation's western districts (these include all or portions of the Nation's Pisinemo, Chukut Kuk, Gu Achi, Sif Oidak, Hickiwan, Gu Vo, and San Lucy Districts). This project will improve emergency response times, foster collaboration between Department of Public Safety (DPS) programs and deliver joint public safety service to the western districts.

The Nation has secured a location for the project in its Pisinemo District and has completed preliminary pre-construction work (including an environmental planning and historic preservation review that includes assessments of cultural/archeological and biological resources and an Environmental Assessment under NEPA) and conceptual design work based on an eastern substation project. The Environmental Assessment completed for the project resulted in a Finding of No Significant Impact. The EOC would co-locate both emergency response personnel, key EOC personnel and joint public safety communications for fire/police and emergency medical services personnel that currently does not exist. Both seasonal monsoonal and tropical weather events have at times made the western districts not immediately accessible from the Nation's only existing EOC in Sells. Geographic communications challenges, further

exacerbated with periodic weather-related power outages to the western communities, have left the Nation’s western districts and communities virtually on their own without access to emergency management, police and fire resources or communications. TONFD, TOPD, EMS, and the Office of Emergency Management have no permanent facility in the region and rely on response from over 40 miles away.

Additionally, the Nation’s DPS components cannot benefit from mutual aid or assistance from outside entities, making the need for the co-location of all services in one facility with full communications critical to emergency operations. A regional EOC would also provide the capability for first responders to rest and recuperate in the area – because there currently is no existing infrastructure they are forced to commute and remain onsite, especially when the roads are impassable. A new regional combined EOC will have an immediate public safety impact that can address all hazards, and greatly reduce the critical vulnerability of the Nation’s population and school districts located in the Nation’s western region during emergency events. The increasingly frequent power outages and extreme heat waves, which have been exacerbated by climate change, further illustrate the importance of having a western substation/regional EOC for emergency response purposes, particularly since approximately 40 percent of existing households are “traditional” in construction and do not have existing utilities, including fresh water.

The budget breakdown for the cost estimate for this request is as follows:

**Pre-Construction:**

- Professional Services \$194,030.00
- Engineering \$50,000.00
- Infrastructure \$172,467.80

**Total Pre-Construction:** \$416,497.80

**Construction:**

- Mobilization \$107,335.70
- General Conditions \$245,080.83
- Site Work/Demolition \$100,000.00
- Termite \$32,142.83
- Concrete \$26,351.33
- Masonry \$26,351.33
- Carpentry \$394,111.58
- Insulation \$27,509.63
- Roofing \$199,227.60
- Windows \$82,239.30
- Doors, Hardware, Trim \$128,571.30
- Drywall \$231,080.85

- Paint \$94,691.03
- Millwork & Tops \$95,559.75
- Marble \$44,304.98
- Flooring \$51,254.78
- Wire Shelves \$19,691.10
- Accessories \$14,768.33
- Appliances \$31,274.10
- Plumbing Rough \$118,146.60
- Plumbing Trim \$96,138.90
- HVAC Rough \$99,034.65
- HVAC Trim \$59,073.30
- Electric Rough \$110,907.23
- Electric Trim \$57,335.85
- Final Clean \$10,424.70
- Close out \$16,505.78

**Total Construction:** \$2,519,113.36

**Construction Grand Total:** \$2,935,611.16

The proposed project is eligible under the FY23 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the EOC Grant Program. The facility meets the definition of an EOC: it is a facility from which “direction and control will be exercised in an emergency ... designated to ensure that the capacity exists for leadership to direct and control operations from a centralized facility in the event of an emergency.” The Nation’s western substation/EOC will support incident management operations across multiple

functional disciplines and jurisdictions, directing coordinated provision of fire, law enforcement, and emergency response services to the Nation's western districts (Pisinemo, Chukut Kuk, Gu Achi, Sif Oidak, Hickiwan, Gu Vo, and San Lucy Districts). As required by the EOC grant program, the Nation's project would improve emergency management and preparedness capabilities by supporting a flexible, sustainable, secure, strategically located, and fully interoperable EOC focused on addressing the identified major deficiencies and needs described above; further, the entire facility directly supports the functional and operational capabilities of an EOC. The Nation has adopted a National Incident Management System and will not use funds received for purposes or costs not allowed under the FY23 EOC NOFO. The Nation has consulted with the Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs, Division of Emergency Management, which has provided a letter indicating that the project is eligible for the EOC Grant Program and "would strengthen the Nation's mitigation, response, and recovery capabilities."

Tohono O'odham Nation stands ready to meet all necessary cost-share requirements. This project meets all eligibility requirements and is ready to begin and obligate funds within a year.

Thank you for your consideration of this important project.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress