



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Inter Tribal Council of Arizona Receives EPA Grant to Help Tribal Communities Protect Children from Lead in Drinking Water**

**Phoenix, Arizona – December 3, 2021** – The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc., (ITCA), a consortium of 21 federally recognized Indian Tribes in Arizona, recently received a \$1,581,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help protect children by identifying sources of lead in drinking water in schools or child care facilities. The funding will help protect children and helps advance the federal action plan to reduce childhood lead exposure. The ITCA project will serve schools or child care facilities at federally-recognized tribes located in New Mexico (in EPA Region 6), as well as those located in Arizona, California, Nevada, and the Navajo Nation (in EPA Region 9). The project will also build on previous lead-testing programs at Tribal schools in these areas.

“Water is sacred in all forms and especially with regard to the drinking water we provide to our children,” stated Maria Dadgar, Executive Director of the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona. “We look forward to working with Tribal schools and child care facilities to assist with developing programs for monitoring their facilities’ drinking water plumbing. This will include providing technical assistance to support addressing older plumbing fixtures and in general, work toward improving the quality of their drinking water.”

The funding was awarded under the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act for states, territories, and tribes to test for lead in schools and childcare facilities. The Voluntary Lead Testing in Schools and Child Care Drinking Water grant program continues to help protect children’s health and make progress under the Federal Action Plan to Reduce Childhood Lead Exposures.

The grant supports EPA’s action plan for reducing lead in school drinking water—Training, Testing, and Taking Action, or the 3 Ts. This toolkit helps prepare schools, child care facilities, and grantees to build a voluntary implementation program to reduce lead levels in drinking water with detailed training modules and materials. Learn more about the 3 Ts here:

<https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/3ts-reducing-lead-drinking-water>

EPA’s Children’s Health program highlights how children can be more vulnerable to pollutants than adults, which can lead to greater exposure and/or unique windows of susceptibility during development. This is especially true of lead—an exposure that would have little effect on an adult can have a significant effect on a child. In fetuses, infants and children, low levels of exposure have been linked to damage to the central and peripheral nervous system, learning disabilities, shorter stature, impaired hearing, and impaired formation and function of blood cells. Lead in drinking water is one of the main ways children can be exposed to lead.

Learn more about and EPA’s WIIN grant programs at <https://www.epa.gov/dwcapacity/wiin-grant-lead-testing-school-and-child-care-program-drinking-water>

Ak-Chin Indian Community  
Cocopah Indian Tribe  
Colorado River Indian Tribes  
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation  
Fort Mojave Indian Tribe  
Gila River Indian Community  
Havasupai Tribe  
Hopi Tribe  
Hualapai Tribe  
Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians  
Pascua Yaqui Tribe  
Pueblo of Zuni  
Quechan Tribe  
Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community  
San Carlos Apache Tribe  
San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe  
Tohono O’odham Nation  
Tonto Apache Tribe  
White Mountain Apache Tribe  
Yavapai-Apache Nation  
Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe