



# BAY MILLS Community College

## Bay Mills Community College: *TCU Ongoing Challenges During COVID-19 Pandemic* 117<sup>th</sup> Congress – February 2021

Through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA), Bay Mills Community College (BMCC) received urgently needed funding to move classes online to the extent possible and begin to address tremendous digital divide challenges. We were also able to provide emergency grants, equipment, and tuition assistance to our students to help them stay enrolled in classes. As we continue to support students during this difficult time and plan for onsite classes, our needs are growing. To address current pandemic-related challenges and plan for an uncertain future, TCUs need your ongoing support.

### CARES and CRRSAA Funds at Bay Mills Community College

- Extra student aid
- Safety/Sanitation: Temperature checks and sanitation stations along with extra staff to sanitize surfaces throughout the day
- IT upgrades
- Classroom changes: Plexiglass partitions, advanced webcams for Zoom classes
- Professional development for distance learning
- Upgraded LMS hosting and internal programs



BMCC used these funds to give students extra aid support, increase safety and sanitation with the addition of temperature scanning stations at every entrance, as well as sanitation stations throughout campus. BMCC also upgraded its IT infrastructure and classroom technology with upgrades such as the purchase of advanced webcams like OWLs and Zoom licenses. Also, plexiglass partitions were installed at every student and teacher's desk. Moreover, BMCC has increased professional development through webinars and conference availability, as well as in-house training. To meet online demands, BMCC partnered with an LMS hosting provider to help better manage the increased online course load.



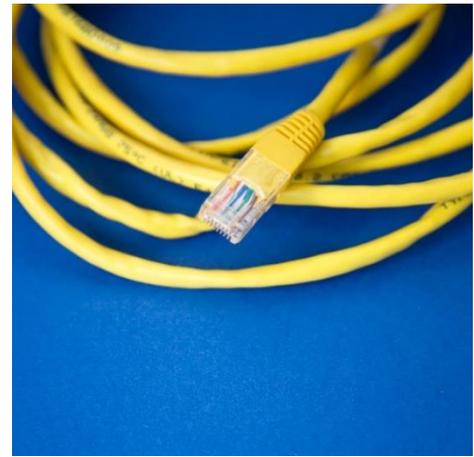
### Ongoing Challenges at Bay Mills Community College

- Emotional, mental, and behavioral health concerns
- Ongoing student support needs
- Drops in enrollment
- Authorized uses need to be expanded to include items such as construction.

Challenges that BMCC still faces include the emotional, behavioral and mental health of our students, faculty, and staff as the pandemic continues with no definite end. We are concerned about drops in enrollment as more students experience financial hardship and poor time management with managing remote-schooled children and their coursework. We have concerns with the restrictions of authorized uses of emergency funds that prohibit TCUs from addressing long-term needs such as construction. As we expand and distance more, we are running out of space for storage

### **REQUEST: \$24 TCU IT Service Fund: USDA – Rural Utility Service**

The ongoing pandemic has exacerbated the digital divide and homework gap and underscored the lack of broadband access across Indian Country. To address these deficiencies, Congress should establish a *permanent TCU IT Service Fund* within the existing (and previously under-used) **USDA-Rural Utilities Service Program**. An annual \$24 million set-aside for TCUs, which are the 1994 Land-grant institutions, is needed to cover ongoing equipment costs, maintenance and upkeep, infrastructure expansion, and IT staffing. If TCUs had adequate funding for IT service and infrastructure support, they would have already put in place many of the community-based mobile hot spots needed to address the “homework gap” on many reservations.



### **Bay Mills Community College: Broadband and IT Challenges**

- Increases in videoconferencing on-campus, as well as work-from-home employees remotely connecting to on-premises servers, have caused college bandwidth to reach its maximum at 100 megabits per second.
- Some remote employees were limited to DSL or had no internet connectivity at all, which required cellular hotspots that had data caps and rate limits. Some employees had limited cellular service.
- Four campus sites are stuck on DSL speeds which made videoconferencing at those locations problematic. If these campuses had fiber availability, there would be no such problem.
- Extending wireless access at our campus sites proved to be problematic with limited internet service, as well as aging equipment which simply could not extend out into the parking lot. We had no outdoor-rated access points deployed.
- 75 new laptops had to be purchased for student services to loan out to students. Some of the previous equipment was over 9 years old, and if it had not been for the CARES act funding those 75 new laptops would not have been purchased.
- Most employees did not have college laptops to work from home. Within the next five years, if additional funding is not secured, the college will be unlikely to replace that equipment with newer hardware.
- Aging college servers, such as the VPN or RDS server, experienced a significant slowdown when employees working from home were connecting to them. This caused much frustration and loss of productivity with employees.
- Outdated classroom technology, such as older projectors/screens, has made student learning difficult for socially distanced on-campus classes.



### **REQUEST: \$500 million TCU Construction Fund: DOI – Bureau of Indian Education**

A recent AIHEC survey of TCUs revealed a list of chronic facilities-related maintenance and rehabilitation needs, including student and faculty housing, classrooms, libraries, and laboratories. The TCUs have an estimated total need of \$489.75 million in deferred maintenance and rehabilitation and need \$837 million to fully implement existing master plans. A dedicated TCU deferred construction and maintenance/rehabilitation fund through the DOI-BIE would help meet the 21st century needs of *all* TCUs, including technology-enabled facilities; campus renovations; IT infrastructure; and facilities necessary for career, technical, and pipeline programs.

### **Bay Mills Community College: Facilities Needs -- Construction, Maintenance, Rehabilitation**

Like other TCUs, Bay Mills Community College is limited when it comes to space in classrooms, space for storage, and space to provide additional student services that will ultimately help students become successful in their academic, personal, and professional endeavors. Having the ability and means to provide maintenance for existing structures and having funds to build new facilities would allow BMCC to provide more services to students and the Bay Mills Indian Community.

- More classroom space is needed to accommodate for occupational programs in the trades fields.
- New data centers to ensure access to learning material and online classrooms are always available.