



# KIOWA TRIBE

**P.O. Box 369 • Carnegie, Oklahoma • 73015**  
**Phone: (580) 654-6338 • Fax: (580) 654-1788**  
**OFFICE OF THE LEGISLATURE**

---

May 25, 2025

## UPDATE FROM THE LEGISLATURE ON THE ANNUAL BUDGET

Building a budget that best serves the needs of Cauigu families is an undertaking that requires collaboration among – and input from – a variety of stakeholders: each branch of the Tribe government, the professionals tasked with leading programs and departments, and the Kiowa people at large. In prior years, the process of developing the Annual Budget has followed the blueprint defined in the Constitution with construction of a proposal by the Chairman and the passage of same proposal (or, alternately, a Legislative budget proposal) by the Legislature to the election ballot.

However, that sequence has historically overlooked a vital priority: you. Kiowa citizens are the lifeblood of our sovereign nation; our governmental infrastructure must foreground their interests above all else. Budgets are nothing less than a blueprint of values. How resources are allocated reflects what we hold most important.

On March 31, 2025, the Legislature published an update on the Annual Budget for the forthcoming fiscal year commencing July 1<sup>st</sup>. At that time, the Legislature had devised several key initiatives to better support Tribe Members including a 29% increase in Emergency Assistance funding; a \$220,000 earmark for Back-to-School Assistance; an Emergency Respond Fund to streamline aid in the aftermath of natural disasters; a boost in the Kiowa Princess stipend; and line-itemized security to sustain the \$1,000 disbursement rate for the Elder Payment.

Those are positive steps on which the Legislature is committed to making further inroads. However, there remain a number of variables with significant impact on the overall financial health of the Tribe about which the Legislature has sought more definitive clarity from the Executive Branch over the course of the past two months. Those points of concern include the following:

1. The status of an investigation initiated by the National Indian Gaming Commission (NIGC) in November 2023 into “potential misuse of gaming revenue” and violations of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA), NIGC regulations, and the Tribe gaming ordinance. The NIGC has characterized its inquiry as “ongoing” as of March 2025 and raised the possibility of a civil fine. This contradicts public comments authored by the Chairman of the Kiowa Casino Operations Authority in January 2025 on social media which suggested a final determination had been issued by the NIGC. With federal programmatic funding already in flux, the prospect of



civil penalties introduces troubling implications for the fiscal welfare of the Tribe at large and its gaming enterprise specifically. The Legislature reached out to agents of the Executive Branch on December 12, 2024; March 28, 2025; and April 9, 2025, to formally request documentation related to this matter before receiving any records.

2. The \$8,530,134 in questioned Tribe applications of Coronavirus Relief Fund monies identified in a Memorandum published by Deborah Harker, Assistant Inspector General for Audit at the United States Department of the Treasury, on December 20, 2024. A desk review analyzing the Tribe's use of CFR funds from March 1, 2020, through September 30, 2022, was formally launched by Castro & Company, LLC. (Castro), on January 22, 2024, in coordination with the Treasury Office of Inspector General (OIG); although extensive dialogue ensued between Castro and the Kiowa Tribe Executive Branch, the Legislature only learned of the probe in March 2025 via social media. The Chairman has expressed confidence that information supplied to OIG will be sufficient to positively address the claim and avoid any clawback of federal monies, but the Castro review expressly notes that, "the transactions selected for testing were not selected statistically, and therefore results could not be extrapolated to the total universe of transactions." Given the consequent possibility that unsupported expenditures could thus exceed the amount already subject to scrutiny, the Legislature asked, both verbally and in writing, the Executive Branch to relay comprehensive clarifying documentation. Following multiple requests in March and May 2025, records were transmitted from the Finance Department on May 10, 2025, and are presently under evaluation.
3. The financial state of Kiowa, Inc., and details of the failed Indian City Screen Printing business venture. The net loss of \$448,294.19 in Tribe monies by same enterprise between July 2022 and December 2023 raises pressing questions about the viability and funding sources of other economic development undertakings initiated by the Chairman. The Legislature has formally requested additional information regarding the financial mechanics of Kiowa, Inc., and several affiliated forecasted endeavors but received no response to date that supplies full clarity.
4. Inflated compensation for select positions under the umbrella of the Tribe Executive Branch, including the \$206,000 salary assigned to the role of Attorney General. Same rate of pay exceeds the compensation of the majority of state Attorneys General across the U.S.
5. The inequitable implementation of raises for Tribe staff as proposed by the Chairman, with a concentrated sampling of personnel slated to receive pay hikes between 8.05% and 17.02%, increases far in excess of the standard 3% projected for most employees.

The Legislature is diligently continuing its work to finalize an Annual Budget for FY 2025 – 2026 that both centers Kiowa families and responsibly stewards your Tribe money. As previously noted, the Executive Branch missed its deadline for submission of the Chairman's Budget. Because the Legislature cannot legally advance that late submission to the ballot, it will develop its own in accordance with the standard Legislative Process for final ratification by Cauigu voters.

However, a systematic and organized approach to any budget nevertheless entails the free exchange of data. Despite invitations issued by the Legislature, the Chairman has declined to participate in any meetings to discuss the Annual Budget since March 19, 2025, and legislative efforts to ascertain facts have been met with routine delays.

Transparency and accountability require consistent actualization. With the enumerated questions and concerns lingering over Tribe finances, the Legislature will not be sending a final budget to the Election Commission for the forthcoming fiscal year until the Executive Branch provides more thorough clarity. There will be minimal interruption to programmatic funding as the Constitution stipulates, "If a new budget is not approved by the beginning of the fiscal year, then the most recently approved budget shall remain in effect until a new budget is approved."

The Legislature will fulfill its duties with the seriousness of thought and analysis that the Kiowa people deserve. In his weekly address to the Kiowa Talk radio program audience on May 24, 2025, Chairman Spottedbird asserted that the Legislature is "not working in concert with the Executive Branch" and "making things more difficult for no reason." If the Chairman believes that "Kiwos Standing Together" inherently precludes the Legislature from seeking information and facts about your Tribe monies, then that is cause for grave worry and unease among our people.

The Legislature encourages all Tribe Members to stay engaged. Contact information for each legislative office is available at [www.kiowatribe.org/legislative](http://www.kiowatribe.org/legislative). The Legislature looks forward to growing a future that benefits all Kiowas, not just a favored few.

In service to our citizens,

*Michael Primus*

Michael Primus  
Speaker of the Legislature  
The Kiowa Tribe Legislature