

# [NCUIH Comments on the IHS Urban Indian Infrastructure Study](#)

Category: Policy Blog

written by Palmer Scott | September 21, 2022

On August 23, 2022, the National Council of Urban Indian Health (NCUIH) submitted comments regarding additional funding for the Urban Indian Infrastructure Study (Infrastructure Study) provided by the [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022](#). The additional fiscal year (FY22) funding for the Infrastructure Study is approximately \$800,696. NCUIH supports the appropriation of the additional funding and it recommended that IHS disseminate the findings of the FY21 Infrastructure Study, already in progress, to UIOs prior to making any decisions regarding the use of the additional funding. NCUIH also requested that the Office of Urban Indian Health Programs (OUIHP) create a timeline of when the Infrastructure Study will be released to UIOs, the contracting process necessary to use additional funding, and the deadline for obligation of the additional funding. Lastly, NCUIH requested that IHS host an additional Urban Confer after the release of updates about the scope and results of the FY21 Infrastructure Study.

## **Background**

In 2021, Congress allocated \$1 million in funds for IHS to conduct an Urban Indian Infrastructure study through the [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021](#). The [purpose of the Infrastructure Study](#) is to further understand the most critical deficiencies facing UIOs. IHS contracted with The Innova Group, a healthcare consultancy entity, to conduct the Infrastructure Study.

On March 15, 2022, Congress provided \$800,969 in additional funding to IHS for the Infrastructure Study through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022. As of September 2022, the results from the Infrastructure Study have not been released by IHS and The Innova Group. On June 16, 2022, [IHS requested input](#) regarding the additional funding from 2022 and how these funds can be utilized by IHS. On June 23, 2022, UIO Leaders and NCUIH attended an [Urban Confer](#) where IHS explained that the Infrastructure Study will be completed by December 31, 2022, with results to be released in January 2023.

## **NCUIH's Recommendations to IHS**

NCUIH made the following recommendations regarding the Infrastructure Study:

- Provide UIOs with the findings from the first Infrastructure Study prior to making any decisions regarding use of the additional funds
  - It is crucial that UIOs are aware of the scope, results, and usefulness of the Infrastructure Study before they make any recommendations regarding the use of the further funding.
  - Given the timeline presented during the Urban Confer, there should be an 8-month window in which UIOs and IHS will be able to review the Infrastructure Study results following their release in January 2023 and decide as to the best use of the additional funding
- OUIHP should provide a timeline of the Planning Process to UIOs
  - NCUIH requested a timeline be released to UIOs delineating when the initial Infrastructure Study will be released, the contracting process necessary to use the

- additional funding, and the deadline for the obligation of the additional funding.
- The requested timeline will provide clarity to UIOs. With a clearer picture in mind, the planning process and use of the additional FY22 funds for the Infrastructure Study becomes more cooperative between UIOs and IHS.
- IHS should host an additional Urban Confer after releasing the results of the Infrastructure Study.
  - NCUIH notes that informed feedback from UIOs creates a scenario where the additional funding can be best used to support the needs of UIOs.

NCUIH continues to advocate for transparency in the process of the Infrastructure Study and greater support to address the critical infrastructure needs at UIOs. NCUIH will continue to keep UIOs informed as more information is made available from IHS.