

March 13, 2020

WSCAT office temporarily closing due to coronavirus concerns:

Dear Warm Springs community members,

As coronavirus (COVID-19) developments change hour by hour, WSCAT is doing its part to flatten the curve of transmission. After communicating with various regional, tribal, and nonprofit leaders, we have decided to suspend all direct services to the community through April 30th.

This includes our Tax Aid income tax filing service; all of our courses, workshops, conferences, and events; and our financial, small business, and homeownership counseling services. Many of our client services can be performed remotely (by phone or other means), and we are committed to providing these services to the community however we can. Our office, however, will be closed.

We strongly considered ways to keep our Tax Aid service open, as we still have approximately 200 appointments set up with Warm Springs community members between now and April 15th. Unfortunately, our partner AARP, which manages the program nationally, has closed down all of its 5,000+ Tax Aid sites nationwide, including ours. To operate our program, we use equipment and software provided by and licensed to AARP.

Our decision to close the office was not an easy one. We truly love serving the Warm Springs community, and believe in the importance of what we do. We believe, however, that the most responsible course of action, in the interest of protecting community members from the COVID-19 virus, is to close our facility and to adhere to recommendations of public health officials. Our staff serves up to 60 clients per day, sometimes in less than spacious environments, and many of our clients are elders and people with health issues putting them at a greater risk of contracting the virus.

We are sorry that this will inconvenience many community members. We promise to monitor the situation carefully and will keep you informed as it changes. We pledge to re-open in as timely a way as possible. Our staff will continue working (mostly teleworking), but our building will not be open to the general public until after April 30th.

We will make more announcements in the coming days and weeks on the specific services we will continue to provide, and on the rescheduled dates of courses, conferences, workshops, and other events being postponed. Please feel free to call us at 541-553-3148 if you have questions.

Sincerely,  
WSCAT staff and board