Carole Garner

0:30
Hello, and thank you for joining us today. We'll begin shortly. Before we begin, I'd like to direct your attention to the slide on the screen. Due to the format of our webinar, we regret that the diary and audio is not available for the first 15 minutes of this webinar when we have prerecorded content. If you would like to listen to this webinar on your mobile device, you must download the GoToWebinar app for Android or Apple.

0:59
If you're not able to download the app, rest assured, this webinar will also be available for on demand viewing at broadbandUSA.gov/past-event, no later than August 30th. Thank you, and we'll begin.

1:26
Hello and thank you for joining us today for Broadband USA's webinar. I am Margaret Gutierrez with NTIA's Broadband USA program. As a reminder, this webinar is being recorded and will be posted to NTIA's BroadbandUSA Program website. Today's webinar focused on NTIA's Tribal Broadband Connectivity Grant program.

Margaret Gutierrez

1:46
Before we begin, I would like to review logistics for today's webinar. First, we will open up the webinar for questions after the completion of the presentations. As you hear from each presenter, please use the question box on the right-hand side of the screen to submit your questions or comments.

2:00
Second, the presentation, along with a transcript and audio recording of today's session, will be available on the BroadbandUSA website within seven days of this webinar, under the Events/ Past Events tab.

2:12
Finally, please visit our Broadband USA website for information about our technical assistance program, including useful guides, products, publications, and other tools that can assist you with planning, funding, and implementing your Broadband project. We provide updated information, including our monthly newsletter and other broadband news.

I would like to provide you with a brief background on each of our presenters today. Vanesscia Cresci, is part of our BroadbandUSA team here at NTIA, and she's a broadband program specialist.

2:40
She's also a citizen of the Navajo Nation born and raised in Shiprock, New Mexico. She currently resides in Sacramento, California.

2:49
She has more than 20 years of experience in public health management, a Master of Social Work degree from Washington University in St. Louis, and a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Southern California.

3:00
Crystal Hottowe comes to us from the Makah Tribe located in Washington State, for 12 years Crystal served as the grants writer for her tribe with a focus on state and federal grants. In addition to her grant writing duties, Crystal is also detailed to the Makah Tribal Broadband Project, which entailed not only a wireless network deployment, but also negotiations with industry. She was very active with the national, regional, and statewide policy groups.

3:23
Nicholas Courtney is an enrolled member of the Makah Tribe. Nick earned his Bachelor and Master's degrees from Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington, and was raised in Auburn, Washington on Muckleshoot Tribal Lands. Before joining us at NTIA, Nicholas served as the Director of Policy at the National Congress of American Indians, serving the broad interests of tribal governments and communities. Previous to working at NCAI, Nicholas served as program director for the Native American Political Leadership Program at George Washington University.

3:50
Adam Geisler is a national tribal government liaison with the First Responder Network Authority, serving western tribes in FEMA Regions 9 and 10. He is a member of the La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians near San Diego, California, and has served in an elected leadership role with his tribe running tribal government and shaping national policy and public health, transportation, economic development, and housing for over a decade.

4:11
He has led his tribe through four federally declared disasters, has served as vice chairman and founding board member of the inter-tribal Long Term Recovery Foundation (a disaster response and recovery organization), and is a recipient of the International Wireless Communications under 40 Leadership Award.

4:27
Gabe Montoya is an enrolled member of the Pueblo of Pojoaque located in northern New Mexico. He has served on tribal council for 27 years, and on the Board of Directors for the Tribe's Economic Development. He brings over 10 years of experience in Tribal broadband to NTIA, including his service as a board member and chairman for Redi-Net, regional multi governmental JPA collaboration, which was set on bridging the digital divide to bring broadband services at affordable prices to their constituencies for the good of their communities.

4:55

My name is Margaret Gutierrez, and I will be your moderator. I'm an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. I spent 10 years with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians as the Director of Emergency Services. I am the first Native American graduate at the Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security Program. I hold a master's degree in security studies. I'm a professor in the School of Criminology, Criminal Justice, and Emergency Management at Cal State University Long Beach. I'm a national tribal liaison for FirstNet, and I serve as the principal point of contact for tribes and FirstNet FEMA regions 1-8. I am currently on detail to NTIA working on the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Grant Program.

5:32
Today's agenda, we'll review the top 10 questions regarding the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Grant Program, review the BroadbandUSA, Tribal Resources, and then some time for question and answers at the end. And with that, I will turn it over to Nick to kick off our top questions and answers.

5:50

Nicholas Courtney

Thank you for that introduction, Margaret, and good morning, and good afternoon. My name is Nicholas Courtney. Our first question is, where can I find the SF-424 Forms if I choose to mail or e-mail in my application?

6:04
The answer is, regardless of whether you e-mail or mail in your application, you can find all the SF-424 forms by visiting the grants.gov website at grants.gov. Once you get to grants.gov, you will see on the top bar, there is a menu item called "forms", as illustrated by the red arrow on your screen. When you hover over the word forms, a drop-down menu will appear. Once this happens, you want to select the SF-424 Family, again, as illustrated by the red arrow on your screen. This will bring you to a menu of forms, some of which are required for the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program application.

6:50
A note that the image on your screen does not show all of the forms available under the SF-424 family, and it is simply a snapshot of those that would fit in the image for this presentation. You can also access this page directly by visiting grants.gov/web/grants/forms/SF-424-family.html.

7:28
This brings us to our next question, which is, what federal forms are mandatory for the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program?

7:40
You can see that the answer to this question depends on which project an eligible entity is applying for, which can be split into 1 of 3 options. The first option is for applicants applying for just broadband use and adoption projects. For this option, an applicant will need to fill out the SF-424, the SF-424A, the SF-424B, CD-511 and the standard form, SF-LLL. For those applying for broadband infrastructure deployment projects only, you will need to fill out the SF-424, the SF-424C, the SF-424D, the CD-511, and the standard form LLL.

8:35

For those applicants, applying for both broadband use and adoption projects, and broadband infrastructure deployment projects, you'll need to fill out all forms, including the SF-424, the SF-424A, the SF-424B, the SF-424C, The SF-424D, the CD-511, and the standard form LLL.

9:10

With that, I will now turn it over to my colleague, Vanesscia for the next question.

Vanesscia Cresci

9:17

Thank you, Nicholas. Now, for the third question, what programmatic and budget documents are required? So, if you're applying for only the broadband use and adoption project, you will include a project narrative, resumes of key personnel, a budget narrative with detailed budget justification, your indirect cost rate, if that's applicable, documentation and showing status as an eligible entity.

9:45

Any if you're applying for only the broadband infrastructure deployment project, you will include your project narrative, your resumes of key personnel, your budget narrative, and detailed justification, the indirect cost rate, if that's applicable, documentation showing status as an eligible entity, a tribal resolution, and maps of proposed service areas. If you're planning to apply for both types of projects, you will include all of these items that are listed above on the chart.

10:21

For question number four, for the CD-511 Certification Regarding Lobbying Form, the entire Funding Opportunity Number does not fit in the award number field. What should I do?

10:35

We acknowledge that the full opportunity number may not fit within the applicable field in the CD-511 form. Applicants can do 1 of 2 things. They can (1), type that, as much of the NOFO name as they can until the field is completely filled; or (2) use the abbreviation, "NTIA -TBCP-2021."

11:01

Next, I'm going to hand it off to Crystal.

Crystal Hottowe

11:05

Thanks Vanesscia. Question five. When completing federal forms and programmatic documentation, where do I enter the total project cost?

11:09

Well, the answer to that, the total federal budget amount required for the entire proposed project that has entered in SF-424, SF-424A or SF-424C, budget narrative, and budget justification should all match. If you're applying for both the broadband infrastructure deployment and the broadband use and adoption project, the total cost project is the sum of the total of SF-424A and SF-424C. In

the SF-424 item 18 should lift the total federal budget amount requested for the entire project.

11:54
Question six. If I am not required to submit one of the SF-424 form listed under mandatory forms in grants.gov, will the system allow me to submit my application? Also, if I'm required to submit one of the forms under Optional Forms, do I still need to submit?

12:15
Well, the answer to that is yes. You're going to only submit the required forms that apply to the project type you are applying for as outlined in the NOFO. If one of the forms under Optional Forms is listed as a required form in the NOFO you must then submit it.

12:30
Thank you. And I'm going to pass it on over to Adam at this time.

Adam Geisler

12:35
All right, well thanks for that Crystal. All right. Well, let's go on to question number seven. So what is included in the administrative and legal cost classification? And what is the cap on this cost classification?

12:50
So let's talk about the answer. Administrative expenses include costs attributable to accounting, auditing, contracting, budgeting, and general legal services, facility occupancy costs, ergo, rent, utilities, insurance, taxes, and maintenance.

13:10
Also, general liability insurance that protects the organization not directly related to a program, depreciation on buildings and equipment, general office supplies, and general and administrative salaries and wages. Note: Tribal broadband connectivity program grantees may not expend more than 2% of the total funds received on administrative expenses. All right, questioning.

13:38
So, how should I classify personnel time and the SF-424C budget form?

13:44
Here's the answer. If staff are completing administrative or legal function, such as accounting, auditing, contracting, budgeting, and general legal services, their time for these activities should be listed in the admin and legal cost classification. If staff were completing activities associated directly with the project, they should account for their time in that specific cost classification.

14:06
For example, if conducting activities directly related to construction, the time spent on those activities should be listed in the construction cost classification.

14:53
Alright, I'm going to go ahead and hand it over to Mr. Gabriel Montoya, OK.

Gabe Montoya

14:20
Thank you, Adam. Much appreciated.

14:30
Good afternoon. My name is Gabriel Montoya. We're going to go over a couple of questions.

14:34
How should I classify my planning, sustainability and feasibility studies in the SF-424C budget form? What is the funding cap on this activity?

14:45
Applicants should book costs associated with the planning, sustainability, and feasibility study in the miscellaneous cost classification. The costs of planning, feasibility, and sustainability studies may not exceed more than 1% of the total project cost.

15:00
Does NTIA have a specific percentage applicants should use for contingency costs in line 13 of the SF-424C?

15:10
An applicant may include contingency in a budget estimate to the extent that they are necessary to improve the precision of those estimates. Amounts for those major project scope changes, unforeseen risks, or extraordinary events may not be included. Amounts must be estimated using broadly accepted cost, and estimated methodologies specified in the budget documentation of the Federal Award and accepted by the federal awarding agency. Please see 2 C.F.R. 200.433(b). In order for actual costs incurred to be allowable, they must comply with the cost principles and other requirements in this part.

16:00
See, also 2 C.F.R.300 and 200.403; be necessary and reasonable for the proper inefficient accomplishment of the project or program objectives. And verifiable from non-federal entities records. See 2 C.F.R.200.433(b). NTIA has not determine the specific percentage that applicants should use for contingencies, NTIA notes that contingencies are generally considered reasonable, if they are 10 to 15% of construction costs are less, otherwise, the applicants should provide justification for the higher costs.

16:35
Now I'm going to turn it over to Margaret so she can go over BroadbandUSA Tribal Nations resources.

16:45

Margaret Gutierrez

I want to thank our TBCP team for reviewing our top 10 questions and answers. We will now briefly go over some important resources on our BroadbandUSA website. For a full copy of the NOFO, as well as our latest FAQs and webinar recordings, transcripts, and presentations, you can visit our Tribal Broadband Connectivity webpage on our BroadbandUSA website.

17:06

You can find that by going to our homepage, going to the Grants Program tab, and selecting Tribal Broadband Connectivity, as you can see, highlighted by the arrow on your screen.

17:13
We would also like to highlight our Tribal Nations page under our Resources tab. On this page, you will find information about the TBCP, additional resources of interest to tribes looking to develop and implement their own broadband connectivity and digital inclusion programs, as well as contact information for our entire TBCP team.

17:30
We will now begin the question-and-answer part of the webinar, if you haven't already done so please remember to type your questions or comments into the question box on the right-hand side of the screen. We will try to get through as many as we can.

18:01
All right, good afternoon, and I want to make sure everyone can hear me OK.

18:06
You can, yeah, OK, Margaret checked, yes, before we jump into questions, Adam, is there anything you would like to mention before we start?

Adam Geisler

18:17
Yeah, a couple of points.

18:20
I already see some of the questions coming in that are relevant in the chat, but we'll cover this.

18:25
We do a poll every morning of the grants.gov to see how many applications we have in the system and while

18:33
I cannot give you the number today.

18:35
I can say that there are a significant number of applications that are sitting in the system that have yet to be formally submitted.

18:43
So we just wanted to remind everybody that if you are planning on submitting your application, you do need to actually hit the submit button for the application.

18:52
Uploading your forms into grants.gov alone does not equate to a submission. You actually need to formally submit the application through the system, so we just wanted to remind everybody.

19:04

For those of you that have been working on an application, or you think you submitted an application, please go double check that you hit the Submit button for your application in grants.gov.

19:16
All right, The second item here, for what it's worth, guys.

19:20
This topic of conversation doesn't bring anybody on the team, any pleasure, but it's the reality of the environment that we're in.

19:27
And we have been, we've wanted to be as transparent and truthful with you in terms of process that we can.

19:33
And so here's the reality when it comes down to the timeline extension requests that many of you have been asking or inquiring about with regards to the 90 day application window. It is a statutory element, so, this wasn't the brainchild of NTIA.

19:51
This was actually something that was put into HR 133, Section 905, that essentially mandated the timeline, and so we are working on being in compliance with that timeline.

20:04
So I know a number of you are being impacted by natural disasters wildfires,

20:10
Hurricanes, some of your communities are being shut down due to COVID. Some folks aren't even in the office.

20:17
And while we recognize and can truly appreciate the environment that you're in, on a personal level, on a professional level, we want to make it really clear.

20:25
And again, doesn't bring us any joy and saying this, that timeline is, the deadline is September 1st, and so you need to get any form or fashion of your application that you can into us.

20:36
So with that being said, as I just mentioned, any form or fashion of the application that you can get into us, especially if you're being hit with those circumstances.

20:45
We have a mandate to cure applications. We can't cure an application, an application if we don't receive it.

20:53

So please do your best to get what information you have in if you're being impacted by the pandemic or natural disasters and we're going to do our best to cure the applications in the best way that we can.

21:05
Again, if you don't hit submit and turn in the basic documentation needed for the application, there's no way for us to cure it.

21:13
So if you're able to, please look hard at getting that application in and submitted how you can.

21:20
I also want to highlight one last thing.

21:22
There are alternative methods for submission as well, so maybe you're not able to get into the office, but, and, or you can't get to your work e-mail. I'm not sure what your environments are, but remember that you can actually submit via post mail. All that I ask is that you reach out and co-ordinate with me, so we know that it's coming, and that we can co-ordinate the receipt of that application. Again, September 1st is the deadline for the application.

21:49
In addition to that, if you're looking at an e-mail submission, you'll also need to coordinate with me as well, and we need to make sure that, again, you are hitting that submission over to us and it's coordinated, and that we receive it prior to this or September first or earlier.

22:04
Alright, Margaret. I'm going to turn it back over to you for the rest of the Q&A Thank you.

Margaret Gutierrez

22:09
Thank you, Adam.

22:10
And I see a couple of those questions still come in, I'm going to read them just for the record because people have said that they want to read just for the record.

22:16
So, they will come out again.

22:20
Vanesscia the NOFO indicates page 15 that the SF-424C should be used for the infrastructure portion while the SF-424A should be used for the adoption portion.

22:29
Does this mean the construction cost should only be listed in the infrastructure budget? Even those activities align more closely with adoption as described in the NOFO.

Vanesscia Cresci

22:42
Thank you. There are two types of projects within the tribal broadband connectivity program, So, there's the broadband use and adoption, and then a broadband infrastructure deployment project. You will complete the SF-424A to cover all costs associated with the broadband use and adoption project activities, and then you will complete the SF-424C to cover all the costs for your broadband infrastructure deployment project.

23:05
Each type of project has different eligible uses and costs, and you can go to page 31 of the NOFO to see a list of eligible uses and costs that are associated with each project.

Margaret Gutierrez

23:19
Thank you.

23:20
Here's another one of those questions, Adam. Adam will the NTIA consider the situation we are in about COVID 19? A lot of tribes are just not coming back to work full-time, will NTIA consider extending the closing date for an extension?

23:32
Considering the deadlines? Most tribes are still dormant.

Adam Geisler

23:36
So Chief, I guess, again, it brings us no joy to have to convey the message, but we have to convey the message.

23:46
And so no, we are not going to be doing any extensions for the tribal broadband program at this time as the windows are statutory.

23:56
And so, as you know, a tribal leader yourself, you recognize that, when I say statutory that as an act of Congress, that, that would take in order to modify that timeline. So again, my apologies, but I also we're going to be a straight shooter. How and when we can hear with what the information is, and that's, that's the truth.

Margaret Gutierrez

24:16
Adam, again, is an operating company subsidiary of an Alaska native corporation eligible to apply?

Adam Geisler

24:24
It depends. So we have basically put the onus on the applicant to identify why they believe they are an eligible entity.

24:34
And, in fact, we ask in both narratives whether you're doing a broadband use and adoption, or a broadband infrastructure proposal, or both we ask that you identify and provide documentation as to why you're an eligible entity.

24:48

And so, I, again, not knowing the details, the organizational structure. I mean, all those pieces that need to be evaluated. I really would encourage you to take a look at the definition of eligible entity on page. I want to say it's page 7 of the NOFO in the definition section.

25:06
It is, and see where your tribal entity fits or if you are a tribal entity, excuse me, an eligible entity. So, so page 7 of the NOFO, again, it's on the applicant to identify why they believe they're eligible for the program.

25:24
Thank you.

Margaret Gutierrez

25:25
Vanesscia, when determining what five resumes to including the application, are key consultants and technical members considered a part of the applicant organization?

25:36

Vanesscia Cresci
Resume should be of key staff of the applicant, not consultant, sub awardees or contractors. Their information can be included in the table of funded project participants. And unfunded inform a collaborator section. So just submit resumes of the applicant.

25:55

Margaret Gutierrez
Nick, is the entire project team evaluated in measuring capacity of an applicant, or is it only the five resumes in the applicant organization?

26:04

Nicholas Courtney
Thanks for that question.

26:06
So, reviewers will assess the strength of our applicants organizational capacity is necessary to undertake and complete the project, and, therefore, reviewers will consider the years of experience and expertise of our project management team. And the past track record of the organization of any sub grantee proposes to use with projects out of similar size and scope, as well as the organizations and individuals and sub grantees, capacity, and readiness.

26:32
We will also assess the strength of the applicant's partnerships or the sub recipient strategy, including how it complements the applicant's organizational capacity, as well as the project approach, feasibility and timely completion of the proposed project. So, if you believe that someone is critical to your teams and to your team's success, please include their resume for justification of an applicant's organizational capacity.

27:02

Margaret Gutierrez
Thank you, Nick.

27:03

Again, just for the record, someone else asked if there would be an extended closing date on the grant? I think we've answered that, but I just wanted to read it for the record.

27:10
Vanesscia, can tribes have one combined budget justification and budget narrative for a deployment and adoption and use application?

Vanesscia Cresci

27:24
So, applicants should have a separate budget justification and budget narrative for each of the projects, so one for their broadband infrastructure deployment, and one for the broadband use and adoption. Just as a reminder, you also need to complete the SF-424A for broadband use and adoption projects, and the SF-424C for the broadband infrastructure deployment projects.

Margaret Gutierrez

27:47
Thank you.

27:48
Crystal, if a tribal utility is applying on behalf of the tribe, can they use the tribes' grants gov account or should they create a separate profile?

Crystal Hottowe

27:58
Thank you for that question. So, the NOFO goes into the application submission guidelines, and that's on page 14. But at this point, being about a week away from the deadline, it really, it's best to utilize an account that has already been established, as there are going to be waiting times associated with establishing a new grants.gov profile.

Adam Geisler

28:26
Margaret, I'm just going to chime in on that a little bit more, because that was a good great response, Crystal. I think there's just one more piece we got to identify in terms of who the applicant is, right. So if the telecommunications organization, I think is how it was worded. Say that again, tribal utility.

28:47
So if the tribal utility is basically doing all the legwork but they're applying underneath the tribes' DUNS and EIN, the tribe is the applicant.

28:58
And that means the tribe is on the hook for the reporting and the implementation of the program to be done successfully.

29:05
So we just want to highlight that that, you know, if you're if you're working on an application where you have a utility authority, or a Teleco, or an arm of the Tribe, that's kind of doing the legwork, but you're actually having the tribal government apply that it's the tribal government

29:22
who's responsible for the administration of the programs.

29:25

So, I just Great response, Crystal, but I thought we double down on clarifying just that one piece. So, there's no confusion, because I think I've seen some of these questions come in in the last few days, so, I figured I might as well just get it out there.

29:37
Thanks.

29:39
Margaret Gutierrez

Thank you.

29:40
Vanesscia, in grants.gov and specifically in the attachments file, what file types are allowable, our map shape files are in the zip folder.

29:47
I'm allowed to attach them, but when I downloaded the form and attempted to open it, Adobe restricts my ability to open the zip file that has been attached to the PDF.

29:59
Vanesscia Cresci

There is a file requirement for the attachments, for this funding opportunity. All attachments should be added via the SF-424 under Section 15 of that form there, is a button that reads add attachments.

30:13
You can attach all of your supporting documentation through the SF-424. This will create a zip file that allows for transmittal of the documents electronically via grants.gov.

30:25
More information on the application format can be found on starting on page 23 of the NOFO.

30:34
Margaret Gutierrez

Thank you, Vanesscia.

30:35
Adam, given NTIA has asked for solutions that are future proof and eliminate the digital divide forever. How will large proposals be negotiated?

30:43
Are large proposals that exceed the $50 million off selling, will NTIA negotiate with the applicant to adjust the scope, or simply not fund the project cost?

30:53
Adam Geisler

I mean, I appreciate the question.

30:57
So, I guess I will just respond with, I guess, we're going to evaluate all proposals in the same manner that is described in the NOFO on page 38.

31:05

So, whether you're applying for, I don't know, $200,000 or $200 million, the criteria for evaluation is the same, right? So, levels of need are different and measured.

31:18

And those are some of the things that we look at, but I'm going to point you to page 38 with regards to what we would or would not negotiate. We're not gonna get into that type of what if scenarios right now. And I know a lot of you are trying to hedge your bets, or look for certainty or not ask for more than what you need.

31:37

But again, that this program was meant for you to identify what the solution is, and I think you identified that in your question. Long term, future route, proved scalable, affordable, you mean you guys see all the buzz terms that we have in the NOFO.

31:51

So, without understanding the applications in detail, and we're not going to speak to that too much further. I'll leave one last piece here. We do reserve the ability to negotiate, and also put forth award conditions, that's also outlined in the NOFO as well.

32:10

So, again, a lot of the circumstantial questions, I know this probably isn't the answer that you want.

32:15

But the reality is, is that we haven't had, we don't have your proposals, So, if you're asking it how we're going to evaluate it, it's outlined in the NOFO in terms of what we're looking for, whether it's a small project or a large project. And we reserve the right to, to negotiate and put award conditions on depending on the applicant and the project.

Margaret Gutierrez

32:36
Thank you, Adam.

32:37
Nick, when reviewing proposals, do reviewers have experience and costing large telecom projects?

Nicholas Courtney

32:43
Thank you very much for that question. So over the past month, NTIA have examined the aggregate applications based on qualifications that match the needs of this program and recognizing that it is a Broadband Program selecting reviewers who meet those needs. So, yes.

Margaret Gutierrez

33:04
Thank you, Adam, our tribe is in contact with a telecom company that has a submarine cable project that is planned to be completed in 2023. They do not have funds to branch of fiber cable over to our community, but are willing to put a branch, T, along at along the run, and from that, we can build a fiber end

to our community that could serve as our middle mile. This opportunity just reached us last week, and therefore not a lot of time to plan details for the application.

Adam Geisler

33:33
I'm trying to understand what the question is.

33:38
So maybe if you don't mind, just elaborating, copy paste and elaborate what the questions that you're asking. I mean, we realize that there's a timeline and a window you've heard.

33:48
I guess I've had to be the bearer of bad news today on this one, which is not fun, but you guys have heard what the timeline is. If here's the other thing that I will encourage, and I'm please elaborate on your question, but I'm going to pontificate for 2 seconds.

34:00
Sorry, if you're not at a place to do a full-blown infrastructure project, but you know you want to do something but you don't have all the pieces, I'm going to remind you that you can apply to do feasibility, design, engineering, et cetera.

34:16
All the planning activities in order to evaluate what your options are and to address what the costs are and to figure out what your timeline is going to be and to navigate and identify what your permitting issues might be, et cetera.

34:29
So, if you feel like you're under the gun and you don't feel like you have enough time to truly go after a broader project, I'm going to encourage you to take a look at applying for feasibility, design, engineering, and evaluation activities for your application.

34:51
Remember, we're not the only game in town. There's other monies that are out there in federal resources, and I'm assuming that this question is coming out of Alaska, or Oregon, or Washington, or California, maybe Florida.

35:06
But the bottom line here is, is that there are other funds that are out there besides NTIA that if you have a good plan and design, you may be able to leverage those funds as well. So think through your options. Don't feel like you have to rush.

35:21
We want to see good, sustainable, affordable, scalable commercial grade, and all the other buzz words that we use in the NOFO types of projects.

Margaret Gutierrez

35:32
Thanks, Adam.

35:33

Vanesscia, the first few words of your response to the question broke up. It wasn't understandable. So the question was in grants.gov and specifically in the attachments file, well, file types are allowable: our map shape files are in a zip folder. I'm allowed to attach them, but when I download the form, an attempt to open in Adobe restricts my ability to open the zip file that has been attached to the PDF.

Vanesscia Cresci

35:57
So what I said was that there is no file type requirement for the attachments for this program, but if you're unable to upload your KML file, then I recommend converting it to a PDF and then trying to upload it again.

Margaret Gutierrez

36:15
Thank you.

36:17
Gabe is the timeframe to spend the funding and one year or are there extensions possible?

Gabe Montoya

36:24
Thank you, Margaret. In the NOFO on page three, it says, in part, the period of performance for grants issued pursuant to this program is one year.

36:32
However, the grants office may extend the period of performance beyond one year for broadband infrastructure projects. See Section B of the NOFO for additional information pertaining to the award amounts, and that's what it says in part. But, remember the use and adoption do not have extensions.

Margaret Gutierrez

36:53
Thank you.

36:56
Adam, Hi, NTIA team, thank you for this platform. Any chance of a deadline extension in California there are wildfires, and with the Delta Variant, many tribal offices are closed, and the grant writers do not have broadband access.

Adam Geisler

37:11
There you go out, Adam, in case you joined late.

37:15
First off, heart goes out to you, right? I come from a community that has been impacted by wildfires multiple times. So I totally get it, and I think Margaret can appreciate this, too. We have an emergency management background.

37:28
We understand what you're going through, and again, it doesn't bring us any joy to have to carry the message here, but it is the message. We will not be extending the timeline for the application window. Please do everything you can to get whatever fashion or format of an application do you have in the pipe, and we can work on curing the application once we have that in, but again, we're

going to need some sort of a submission and unfortunately, again, the timeline will not be extended.

38:00
My heart goes out to you and good luck with everything you have going on with your with the wildfires. I know a lot of your being affected.

38:09
Margaret Gutierrez
Thank you.

38:10
Vanessa. We're planning to submit for both use and adoption and for infrastructure deployment.

38:14
We're answering all the questions in 120 page document, combining our answers for both and differentiating with headings. I will submit all the SF-424 as directed, will this work for us?

38:28
Vanesscia Cresci
It's recommended to actually create two separate project narratives. One for the broadband use and adoption, and one for the broadband infrastructure deployment. It'll be easier for the reviewers to distinguish between the two.

38:40
Also, just a reminder is a total, if you're gonna apply for both project types, then it's a total of 40 single space or 80 double spaced pages.

38:53
Margaret Gutierrez
Thank you.

38:54
Again, for those projects being done in Alaska, will reviewers have some level of experience with the remoteness, logistical challenges, and increased costs associated with infrastructure projects in rural Alaska?

39:04
Example will a reviewer understand that $500,000 for barging gravel is normal because there is no gravel Or that $700,000 in helicopter transport for construction crews to the site is normal for middle mile because there are no roads and over land transport will be done with a snow machine or four wheeler and take six hours each way.

39:23
Gabe Montoya
You know, I really appreciate this question. You'd be happy to know the NTIA Tribal team has been working on reviewer guidance that is regionally sensitive for those types of construction projects that are going to affect different region.

39:38
So, that guidance is being considered and will be provided so your application will be reviewed with that in mind.

39:46
Margaret Gutierrez

Adam, will small tribes leading large consortium efforts be penalized for being small? Example, will a 70-person village lead in a 20 village consortium be eliminated from funding for the perception that they are too small to lead a large effort?

Adam Geisler

40:03
First off, let's, let's just address the first issue here, in terms of being eliminated. Our goal isn't to eliminate any of the applications unless we may eliminate activity's, right? There's no trips to Hawaii allowed in the program. You got it. You got to stick to the program eligible activities that are outlined starting on page 32 of the NOFO.

40:29
So, with that being said, you know, we've encouraged consortiums.

40:33
I think what's important is that you take a look, again, back to the evaluation criteria and that you demonstrate in your application, the skill sets and capabilities of you, and your team to implement that project successfully that you're looking to do.

40:50
I mean, it's, we realize that somebody's gotta write the application, right? Somebody has to be the lead. If you're going to do a consortium, and that's OK. The one thing that I would really encourage you to make sure of is that if you're if you're applying as a consortium that you're really thinking about meeting the needs of all of the villages that you're applying for.

41:12
Right?

41:12
Because we are, we're setting a target of 100% of the unserved households and anchor institutions in the community.

41:20
So, you know, be mindful that that is a target that we have in the application.

41:26
So we're gonna focus more on your ability to deliver the team, you know, all the evaluation criteria that we have on page there. I'm pointing over here, I have another screen of the actual digital version of the NOFO. So over here no, but I look at page 38. That's the evaluation criteria we're gonna look at, we're not here to penalize people. We're here to work with you.

41:48
We know all of you are in unique situations and are building unique partnerships and we're going to have to basically take the evaluation criteria and look at every single one of you using that.

41:57

So, keep that in mind if you're looking on how to navigate, but no, we're not looking to penalize anyone.

42:04

Margaret Gutierrez

Thank you.

42:06

Gabe if building middle mile fiber, will the NTIA program, allow an applicant to use satellite backhaul to be used while the middle mile fiber is being constructed.

42:15

Gabe Montoya

Thank you, Margaret, solutions will vary from applicant to applicant, NTIA understands that there will be a very various solutions that will depend upon the application, the applicant's location, geographically, challenges, and available services.

42:30

We look here, here's a simple answer. But we ask that you use the equipment that's going to serve your community, the best. Look at what's going to be able to get to your people, not. Every solution is going to be a one size fits all.

42:45

Adam Geisler

I'm going to chime in on this one just a little bit because I have a feeling I know where this is coming from and it seems to pop up and I don't blame you for asking.

42:55

It seems to come up by both an e-mail and on these in these conversations. It's duplication, guys. Keep in mind that we're gonna fund one solution set, Right?

43:07

And so, if you're looking at a, let's see, here, a satellite backhaul solution to be used to connect houses that means that in that solution is providing 25 3, then you have served that home.

43:23

So you need to keep in mind that if you, if you pick a solution set, that that is the solution set. So be mindful about duplication we are going to be looking for those duplicative situations.

43:36

I know that that probably isn't what a number of you want to hear, but that's the reality, Then it's back to statute. We're not allowed to duplicate services to a single household.

43:47

So you need to find a solution that makes sense for you, if you have a solution that's available to you, and that's what you want to move forward with. And that's what it needs to be in your application.

43:57

Sorry, Gabe I think I know where that was coming from. I just wanted double back on it.

Margaret Gutierrez

44:03

Nick: Does American Samoa US Territory qualify for the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program?

Nicholas Courtney

44:10

Thanks for the question.

44:11

So no eligible applicants include a tribal government, B a tribal college or university, C the Department of Hawai'i Homeland's on behalf of the Native Hawaiian community, including Native Hawaiian Education Programs.

44:27

D a tribal organization, or E an Alaskan Native corporation. There are several instances where applicants will need to obtain a tribal government resolution. And then each eligible entity must coordinate internally in submitting a single application. If you believe that you fall under the definition of tribal organization. We will take a liability on this and we may have fielded questions during our merit review or during our review process and get back to you. Thank you.

Margaret Gutierrez

45:03

Nick you are not out off the hot seat yet.

45:06

I am a small minority business owner specializing in broadband installation. Do I need to be working with any of the groups identified to benefit in this grant program in order to be able to get the grant?

Nicholas Courtney

45:18

The answer is, is yes. You do need to work with eligible entities for the program. Unfortunately, we are unable to share with any entity who has applied to this program, we've received several questions from small minority business owners, large corporations, and such, to get a list of folks and entities that have applied, and unfortunately, we are not able to share this information. So, I would encourage any small minority business owner specializing in broadband installation to certainly be working with an eligible entity of those of which I just discussed.

Margaret Gutierrez

45:55

Nick, again, can a Tribal Health Care Org serve as PI for a consortium of seven tribes for Part A and Part B?

Nicholas Courtney

46:02

Yes, So, a Tribal Health org can serve as a PI for Consortium of seven Tribes. With respect to Part A and B, I don't want to assume anything, but recognizing that there are the infrastructure portion of the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program, as well as the adoption and use portion. And I would like to remind all listening ears that if an eligible entity is not a tribal government

and applying for infrastructure funds on tribal lands, they will need to obtain a tribal resolution from each of those tribal governments. And if an eligible applicant is applying for adoption and use funding there cannot be duplication on certain on the same projects or on eligible lands. So, the two things to watch out for, if you are not a tribal government and a tribal healthcare org is no duplication. And if you are applying for infrastructure funds, to be working with tribal governments to ensure that there is not duplication of build out.

47:02
So, therefore, we encourage you or require you to get a tribal resolution.

47:09
Margaret Gutierrez
Nick, you seem to be on a roll, so here's one more for you. If an institute is listed on the MSI list, does that automatically open up the state territory for eligibility?

47:18
Nicholas Courtney
No, it doesn't. So, an institution as the MSI if I'm just making sure that as an MSI, you mean a minority serving institution, no, it does not. We would also encourage you to look at the Department of Commerce and BroadbandUSA Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program, which is a $268 million grant program to historically black colleges and universities, tribal colleges and universities and minority serving institutions for the purpose of Broadband Internet access Service, and eligible equipment, or to hire and train information technology personnel. That information can be found on BroadbandUSA by searching the Connecting Minorities Communities Pilot Program.

48:08
Margaret Gutierrez
Thank you, Nick, Crystal:

48:09
So, the DUNS number, owner is the administrator, despite the submitter government agency. If the telecom service provider is the DUNS owner that makes them the administrator?

48:22
Crystal Hottowe
Thank you for clarifying question, So, the eligible entities, for example, the tribe, tribal government, etcetera, must submit the application to NTIA. The service provider, if they are not listed as an eligible entity, on page two of the NOFO may not submit the application for this program. The eligible entity will be the grantee, and will be responsible for the grant award.

48:48
I hope that clarifies.

48:50
Margaret Gutierrez
Thanks, Crystal.

48:51
I'm gonna go back to you. Our apologies. The first attempt to address this question, it wasn't read in full, so the question was, Our tribe is in contact with a

telecom company that has a submarine cable project that is planned to be completed in 2023.

49:03
They do not have funds the branch of fiber cable over to our community, but are willing to put a branch T along the run. And from that, we could build a fiber run to our community that could serve as our middle mile.

49:13
This opportunity we just reached just last week and therefore not a lot of time to plan details, but the application. We also anticipate FCC approval of our tribal five license application, that can be used for a last mile distribution through our community. Under the current NTIA TBCP application, we asked the following questions and project scenarios. 1.

49:33
We study plan for fiber since 2023 is beyond the one-year of this current TBCP to be ready for the next round of infrastructure funding, and also build our 2.5, local distribution infrastructure, IE, tower, equipment, etcetera, during this current funding.

49:48
Adam, do you want to address that first? And then I'll read let's, let's start out with that. Yeah, we'll just go one at a time.

49:53
So, can you apply for studies and planning, feasibility? Design engineer?

Adam Geisler

49:59
Yeah, of course, those are eligible activities that you'll find on page 32 of the NOFO.

50:09
So, that's in line, now, at the same time, you also want to build a 2.5location, distribution infrastructure, tower equipment, etcetera, during this current funding.

50:23
I think that there's some challenges in, in this, I think, first and foremost, you're gonna run into a cap on your design expenses of 1%, because you're actually moving into implementation and construction activities, right? The 1% cap isn't applicable if you don't know what you're going to build to or designed to yet, right?

50:47
There's no way for us to cap you if you don't know what you're building, however, if you do know what you're building and you have a plan for that, then that 1% cap would come into play, so keep that in mind.

50:59
The other thing to think about in this discussion is how do you light up 2.5 distribution without your backhaul? So, if you're relying upon the C table as

being your backhaul and your middle mile backhaul to connect to whatever that distribution point is. One of the things we're asking you is, have you fully thought out the application, do you have a good plan?

51:23
Look, again, look at the evaluation criteria on page 38 of the NOFO. And so I would really on the first one here. Encourage you to take a real strong

51:32
look at what the backhaul solutions are that are that are tied to this because we won't just build one piece of the infrastructure without understanding the whole piece. And it sounds like you would need to do some design, plan and feasibility on figuring out that middle mile could be wrong.

51:50
Don't know what your application is. Don't know the details. So I'll throw, you know, 15 caveats to that

51:55
and disclaimers, we don't know what you're applying for, but there's some caution there.

52:01
Let's go to bullet two Margaret. You want to read that one?

52:03
Margaret Gutierrez
We propose the planning, engineering, et cetera, and actual building of the fiber to our community beyond the one-year plus filled our local last mile distribution infrastructure using our 2.5 spectrum.

52:16
Adam Geisler
I mean, those are all activities that are eligible under the NOFO for broadband infrastructure.

52:23
So yeah, I mean, you're looking at a fiber to the community, so essentially, you're running your middle mile to the community, to a distribution point and then deploying that out through 2.5 spectrum.

52:34
Yeah, I mean, those that looks like eligible activities in terms of the one-year timeline, right?

52:41
For infrastructure, it is OK to submit an application that has a timeline longer than one year if you know that that's what it's going to take, you have a good plan, you've assessed for all that.

52:52
And also you can attach, you'll see on the 424C that you can attach, or, excuse me, there's columns there for year, one year, 2 year 3. Depending on what your project is looking at

53:05
and then, I would just encourage you as you're putting your narrative together, again, to point out the language that Mr. Montoya had mentioned earlier about, the extension requests.

53:15
So, you know, if you have a good well thought out plan and you know you're anticipating an extension and you're putting a project forward because you've, you've really done your homework. That's OK. We don't want to discourage you from approaching it from that perspective.

53:29
So, let's go on to question three.

53:34
Margaret Gutierrez

Under either of the prior questions, which proposed to build the tribal spectrum 2.5 last mile in 2022, under this NTIA funding opportunity, the tribe use its own local funds to purchase a satellite receiver to provide temporary Interim service using the 2.5 last mile in 2022. While awaiting the fiber build and its middle mile feed, that would not be available until likely late 2023, early, 2024.

53:57
Adam Geisler

I mean, we get back into the duplication issue here, right?

54:01
I mean, I know some of you say it's a band-aid, or it's an interim solution, but the reality is that this program is really focused on getting a connection to people that have no connection.

54:12
And so if you have an option to bring a connection of 25/3 or greater with sufficient latency to support real-time application utilization, then you're not unserved anymore. So from my end I don't mean to come off too strong here but the reality is that if you have that access then you're no longer unserved.

54:32
And so I just wanted to point that out. So you really want to think about what that solution is. I'm happy to see folks use more than just our funding as part of a solution right complement not duplicate.

54:44
So I like that. It's great to hear that train of thought.

54:47
But I would really encourage you to think hard about the duplication issues that you run into, especially if you're gonna look to apply for future funding from us in the event that that's available. You know there's a big What if right? We may have we may be oversubscribed on this program.

55:04
We may not be, and there may be an infrastructure bill at some point, but we don't know.

Margaret Gutierrez

55:10
Thanks, Adam.

55:11
Vanesscia, could you please clarify where to list resumes of partners and contractors that are not members of tribal applicant?

Vanesscia Cresci

55:24
Project Narrative as part of the table of funded project participants and unfunded and formal collaborators. You can describe the qualifications experience of any sub recipients, contractors, sub awardees, consultant, partners.

55:42
For the infrastructure deployment, you can see page 19 of the NOFO for more information, and for the use and adoption, see page 16 of the NOFO, but you would only submit resumes of the applicant.

Margaret Gutierrez

55:55
OK, so, Vanesscia, your audio is a little broken up, so I'm gonna repeat it again, because someone asked this earlier as well.

56:02
So in the Project Narrative, as part of the table of funded project participant, an unfunded and formal collaborators, you can describe the qualifications and experience of any sub recipients, contractors, sub awardees, consultants, partners.

56:15
For infrastructure deployment, see page 19 of the NOFO and for use and adoption see page 16 of the NOFO you will only submit resumes of the applicant.

56:26
Gabe, when I review the Grant Opportunity, it states the application is due on 12- 1, 21.

Gabe Montoya

56:34
Thank you for that question, Margaret.

56:36
NTIA has three different grant programs running the Connecting Minority Community Pilot Program application is due December 1st, 2021, however, the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program application is due September 1st, 2021.

Margaret Gutierrez

56:55
Thank you. Vanesscia, if the fiscal amount applied for by tribal applicants does not exceed the amount legislative authorizations, will the remaining funds that are leftover be eligible to the applicants funded at some point in the future to expand the total funds authorized?

Vanesscia Cresci

57:16
NTIA may use the remaining available funds in a second round of grant funding.

Nicholas Courtney

57:44
It looks like we have a computer freeze on our end. So, her power went out until Margaret gets back, I'll read this question and Vanesscia, you are also in and out.

57:54
So I'm just gonna read this question where it stands, if the fiscal amount applied for by tribal applicants does not exceed the amount, legislative, authorize, authorize, will the remaining funds that are leftover be eligible to the applicant funded at some point in the future to expend the total funding authorize?

Gabe Montoya

58:14
Would you like for me to answer that Nick?

Nicholas Courtney

58:17
Please. Thank you again.

Gabe Montoya

58:19
If NTIA does not award all available, grant funds in the first round, NTIA may use the remaining available funds in the second round of grant funding, which will be publicly announced through a new notice of funding opportunity.

Nicholas Courtney

58:36
Thank you, Gabe. Adam, this question is for you, will keep, keep the train rolling. Can this grant be used for people in Africa?

Adam Geisler

58:46
I, I really appreciate the consideration of the term tribal, and I can understand how that may translate in different environments. But this program is really focused on US.

59:01
Tribal eligible entity, right, The Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program, you actually read the first couple of pages in the overview of the program, you'll see what the intent of the program is meant to address. Now, with that being said.

59:18
We do not want to discourage any entity that believes that they are eligible to apply, OK?

59:24
Just know that you that you run the risk of being of projects not being awarded if you're deemed not to be eligible. Right? I realize that there are some instances where there may be like tele education elements going on or some types of things happening at the TCU level in terms of exchange.

59:47
So, from that perspective, I guess I could understand why that question may be asked, but

59:55
I'll put a period on it right there. You need to be an eligible entity, under the program to apply, and we'll, we'll move on to the next one.

Nicholas Courtney

1:00:03
Thank you, Adam, so for this next it's a three part question, and we're gonna break it up into those three parts. So I will read the question and have you answer and then read the next.

1:00:13
Our first question is, will NTIA reviewers provide all available scoring for a Tribal government application that proposes co-location of a broadband infrastructure in trench, meaning underground as required due to while wild land fire hazard with electrification conductors, where the transport costs would be shared by NTIA, for broadband and another funding source for electrification, each sharing 50% of the middle mile cost.

Adam Geisler

1:00:50
All right,

1:00:55
Good to see. So OK, you go a trench. You want to lay fiber. You want to lay electrical. You're going to delineate who's paying for what, I mean, great.

1:01:11
Doesn't sound like you have duplication of your delineating and then in terms of will you receive the points available for scoring? I mean, you know, of course, we're gonna, as I mentioned before, right, we're going to evaluate all the applications using their criteria that we have starting on page 38 of the NOFO.

1:01:30
Again, we're not looking to penalize anybody that that has good projects. And it's thinking about leveraging multiple resources. So that's probably the best in terms of an answer I can give you on that one.

1:01:42
Well, next question.

Nicholas Courtney

1:01:44
Thank you.

1:01:45
So our next question is, Will NTIA reviewers assign the highest available score for performance

1:01:53
megabytes per second speed to an applicant proposing the highest feasible broadband service speeds where no Tier one or Tier two transport at higher speeds are available, and the cost of construction of high speed transport is cost prohibitive.

1:02:11
Example, in much of Alaska as single regions costs for providing up to one thousand megabytes per second, speeds would require funding in excess the total funds available in the current Tribal broadband connectivity program.

1:02:27

Adam Geisler

Yeah, so we've addressed the issue of nuances that occur when it comes down to speeds and latency. And so I, you know I can't speak to scoring on something that we don't have an application in front of us for. So we're going to look at every application utilizing the information on page 38.

1:02:51
The goal is to keep in mind what environment we're talking about, and we're going to put it on the applicant to describe what the barriers are as part of your evaluation, on how you reached the solution set, the speed availability, and all of those things.

1:03:07
So, you know, we're not here to penalize anybody, but I can't speak to what we would score or not score.

1:03:13
Again, not having a complete application to understand where we're at. We can't give that kind of feedback at this time.

1:03:22

Nicholas Courtney
OK, and our final question in this group is: Will an applicant providing higher speed Broadband service in megabytes per second for up to 10 points receive the highest score by providing high speeds anywhere in its service area, or must highest speeds be offered everywhere in order to receive the highest score available?

1:03:49

Adam Geisler
More scoring questions. You know, again, I'm just going to come back. I'm not going to answer the question in the way you probably want me to. The goal of the program is to light up 100% of households and getting them 25/3 or greater.

1:04:01
And we really want to see the maximum speeds available to all the households in an application. I mean, that's, that's the goal of the program.

1:04:11
So, again, not understanding the details of the application, what limitations there may be, or not be as to why certain speeds can or cannot be hit, et cetera. It's hard. It's hard for us to be able to give any anything further, right.

1:04:28
And, frankly, we can't be giving, we can't be evaluating your application before anybody else's application, right?

1:04:36
It seems like these are segments coming specific to your application, Right?

1:04:40
We can talk to eligible uses and activities, and try to point you in the direction of what we're looking for in terms of scoring, but weighing in on if you'll receive maximum or not, we can't do that, it's, I appreciate you asking, I get it, I don't blame you.

1:04:57
Go to the next one Nick.

Crystal Hottowe

1:05:02
Actually, I would, this is a question for Nick. Can a tribal healthcare organizations serve as a PI for consortium of seven tribes for Part A and Part B?

Nicholas Courtney

1:05:15
Alright, so, thank you. To re-iterate, my previous response.

1:05:19
Assuming that the Tribal Healthcare Org falls under the definition of a tribal organization, they can serve for PI for a consortium of seven tribal governments for Part A and Part B, assuming that Part A and Part B mean both the infrastructure and adoption and use arms of this program are reminder to all eligible applicants, though.

1:05:42
That if an entity that is not a tribal government is applying for infrastructure grants and infrastructure funding, that they must receive resolutions of support from all tribal governments, that that project goes through. For adoption and use projects a reminder to all eligible applicants, that there cannot be duplication on any part with other eligible entities who are applying.

1:06:15
Adam, you have this question: can a tribe pay for satellite backhaul independently out of their own pocket and not double dip?

Adam Geisler

1:06:26
I mean, you're, you're welcome to pay for any element of infrastructure, whether it's middle mile or last mile.

1:06:38
I think what's important is that you can't double dip when it comes down to the final connection points of households, right? We allow for existing infrastructure to be upgraded in order to deliver 25/3 service to unserved households.

1:06:58
So, you know, maybe there are plenty of people that have a network or a network availability, where maybe it's not a full 25/3, and they're going to leverage our funds to upgrade that infrastructure.

1:07:09
It's OK, we get that.

1:07:12
But, in terms of can a, tribe pay for satellite backhaul independently.

1:07:15
Of course you can in terms of double dipping I'll put a period on this sentence. I'm not sure because we don't know enough about what you're doing in your application.

1:07:28

To be clear on that and I will leave you with one word of caution. Which is, you gotta be mindful about duplication. So, we can't duplicate upgrades to backhaul into the future, if that backhaul is supporting 25/3 last mile connections to households unserved households and anchor institutions.

1:07:49

It looks like we gotta follow up on right along that same line Nick. It looks like it. Yep.

1:07:54

Nicholas Courtney

It does, but before we go into that follow up question, I'd like to see if our colleague Margaret was able to come back online and can, if, if I may, can Margaret can we test your microphone?

1:08:06

Margaret Gutierrez

Yes, can y'all hear me?

1:08:08

Nicholas Courtney

Yes, we can, thank you and I will transfer the authority vested in me as moderator back to you.

1:08:14

Margaret Gutierrez

I am so sorry. OK, Adam, the satellite backhaul does not meet the 25/3. The community is still considered unserved, correct?

1:08:22

Correct.

1:08:24

Adam Geisler

That's right. If you don't, if you don't have 25/3, or you, don't forget the latency component of that too, right.

1:08:33

That also means the ability to sustain real-time application use, such as we'll give examples right ZOOM. What are we on here? GoToWebinar, Google Docs I mean if you can't function in and in the workspace using these real-time applications and late latency is a factor here. So don't forget that.

1:08:55

You do not have access to 25/3 with sufficient latency to support real-time application use, you are considered unserved by the program.

1:09:05

Margaret Gutierrez

Thank you. Adam. Gabe what if the available services very expensive service exists, but it's 2 to 10 times the national level, and, therefore, unaffordable.

1:09:14

Gabe Montoya

Well, first of all, welcome back, Margaret. Nick did a great job, but he's not a Margaret.

1:09:22

So in the NOFO it does say that that it provides affordable broadband programs to Native American and Alaska Native Hawaiian communities, including providing free and reduced cost broadband service and preventing disconnection of existing broadband service.

1:09:39
This is under use and adoption, and it would be considered for use and adoption that you can actually have a different way to be able to service your community.

1:09:52

Margaret Gutierrez

Thank you.

1:09:56
Adam, can you please give an example of commercial grade equipment is listed on page 42 of the NOFO.

1:10:03

Adam Geisler

Let me pull that up really quick.

1:10:22
Sorry, folks! In terms of specific examples, I think that we don't actually give in the NOFO any specific types of equipment.

1:10:51
I think what's important is to look at some of the other facets that that coincide with how we're thinking about commercial-grade: sustainable, scalable, right?

1:11:03
You need to have the capacity capabilities and throughput capabilities to sustain a 25/3 access for households at anchor institutions. And that means that the backhaul that is available is gonna need to be able to be able to support that as well.

1:11:20
So, I also think that probably not the biggest fan of the fact that term isn't here, but, hey, it is so we're not overly prescriptive beyond looking at commercial grade equipment

1:11:36
And making sure that that commercial grade equipment can accommodate sufficient speeds that we're looking for the program, but that is also scalable, sustainable, et cetera. Horrible response, but it's, it's the best we got for you for today.

1:11:55

Margaret Gutierrez

Thanks, Adam.

1:11:57
Again, Adam, does an applicant, get extra points for providing 300, 300 service with a 15 to 1 over subscription ratio versus one gigabyte per second service, but the 200 to 1 over subscription.

1:12:08

Should all applications outline what the over subscription ratio is? Example, the user experience will be significantly better on the 300 to 315 to 1, then one G on 200 for 1.

Adam Geisler

1:12:29
Get extra points. I mean we have our point criteria broken out on page 38, and I hate to sound like a broken record.

1:12:42
Everybody's trying to figure out, how do I get more points? It's in the NOFO guys. You see the scoring criteria that we put forward for speed so I'm gonna point you there.

1:12:52
The other thing that I'm gonna mention to you is put forward the best solution that makes sense for you. I mean, it sounds like you know what gives the best user experience for what you're looking at.

1:13:03
And again, we're looking at it, but we are looking at a 25/3 network access.

1:13:09
So, I really can't answer the question beyond, where I just urge you to look at what we're looking at for points you know. Shoot the moon above, even what we have in there. Great.

1:13:22
I mean, that's awesome. We're happy to see it. But at the same time, we have a ceiling, right? If you go above and beyond there, it gets to a point where you're not we don't have a you notice how the scoring doesn't have bonus points, right? We just have straight points.

1:13:41
So in terms of what ratio makes the most sense you need to put forward what the best solution set is. It's going to have the best user experience giving the level of access to make that household unserved.

1:13:54
Complete fed response. but that's what you get today. Sorry.

Margaret Gutierrez

1:14:00
So, Vanesscia, I'm assuming a lot about this question, actually, this is not a funding question, but more business or organizational question, what should happen that, so I'm assuming the question there is, what are their next steps as far as applying for the grant?

1:14:25
Vanesscia, we can't hear you.

Vanesscia Cresci

1:14:33
Does that work?

Margaret Gutierrez

1:14:34

Yes.

Vanesscia Cresci

1:14:36
So the first thing would be for you to have a grants.gov account.

1:14:40
That would be first thing, if you already done that, then you're one step further and process.

1:14:47
Just checking to make sure that you have all the documentation as outlined in the NOFO. Nick did a great job earlier, talking about all of the required forms and documentation. So making sure you have all that, depending upon which project type in their infrastructure deployment, or use it in all the supporting documentation that's required and then hitting the Submit button.

1:15:15
But if you have any issues with actual grants.gov, they do have a helpdesk 800 number that you can reach out to them as well, if you are having the IT issue.

Margaret Gutierrez

1:15:28
Thank you.

1:15:31
Then, I think, again, just to re-iterate, if there's any questions that the reviewers have from your application, you will be contacted during the hearing process. So, don't forget to hit submit. I know we've said that 10 times today. We'll continue to say it.

1:15:46
We have a lot of applications in the pipeline, and there are a lot of people who still need to submit, and I don't think there's any more questions as of right now.

Adam Geisler

1:16:01
I guess we'll just wind it down, then, Margaret, I guess this is our last webinar so we want to thank everybody that has spent the time to come and participate through the various webinar series that we've been running for the last, literally, three or four months.

1:16:21
We're not done. We will be back with another series of webinars into the future, but in terms of the application and the window, we're gonna go ahead and thank all of you for your participation, your great questions.

1:16:39
You got a few more days left here, so please, please hit submit.

1:16:43
If you have additional questions, you can reach out to any one of us. We realize we're getting close to the 11th hour here, so we're here to help. You know, I'm gonna say this as well even through the weekend.

1:16:55

If you have questions. We all have our phones. We're not gun shy about that. So please, if you have questions and they're burning, it's OK to reach out to us even through this weekend. We'll make ourselves available how we can.

1:17:08

And we're really looking forward to seeing your applications come in and appreciate the thoughtfulness that you put in to this process. So, I guess, with that, Margaret, go ahead and close it out.

1:17:20

Margaret Gutierrez

I see one more question that came in, since the federal government is investing a substantial amount of money for connection access, should Indian Country in this particular field, organize a national effort to try this participate and share their experience and knowledge of broadband capacity building that is going on and how it will impact all manners of life on reservations for the future?

1:17:40

Adam Geisler

You know, it's funny you bring that up, George. I think it was George. I see in the, in the question, we are, we need to get through this application window, right?

1:17:51

We, we have a lot of work in front of the team moving forward, but we've actually had a very similar conversation about the establishment of a tribal leader broadband network, to share best practices, use cases, et cetera. So keep an eye out for that. That is a goal of the team has that we want to pursue.

1:18:14

But, I'm also, if we're being realistic, we also want to get you the money, too. Right, so we're, we're going to navigate our way through that process here to the future.

1:18:24

So keep an eye out for that in the next three to six months, and we definitely will be circling back for that type of a conversation and outreach.

1:18:33

That being said, as we start to award applications, don't be surprised if we reach out to you to participate in that process as we make our awards, right. We'd love nothing more than for you to share amongst one another on what has been working.

1:18:49

Good question. Thank you, George.

1:18:52

Margaret Gutierrez

So, with that, we'll wrap it up. We'll move over and put our contact information up on the screen.

1:18:58

So if anyone has any questions here's how to reach all of us. You can use our e-mails. If you guys have our phone numbers, please feel free to reach out.

1:19:09
And we will do our best to get back to you, especially over this weekend, so you know we're coming up on the deadline.

1:19:16
And with that I want to thank you all, again our speakers today, and all of the attendees, for joining. As a reminder, our presentations, transcripts, and audio recordings will be available on our website within seven days.

1:19:27
Please check the BroadbandUSA website for updates or contact us if you have any questions at BroadbandUSA@NTIA.gov.

1:19:35
Thank you, and hope you have a wonderful afternoon.