

TRIBAL CONSULTATION

NTIA Tribal Broadband Connectivity Grant Program

[Transcript To Be Viewed With Published Video](#)

February 5, 2021

0:05

Good afternoon, or good morning, as the case may be. Welcome to NTIA's Tribal Consultation Session on the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program.

0:15

We are a few minutes after the hour.

0:17

As you know, we had a few technical issues. Hopefully, folks were able to see the comments come into the chat box so that you are aware we were working through those, and we have opened this session. I think you are in listen only mode to cut down on background noise. It looks like we have got about 200 folks on the line.

0:44

The primary purpose of this tribal consultation session is to hear from tribal leaders or their designee for input on the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. It is not an open meeting, and we would ask that any press who are on the line, please disconnect now.

1:08

As a matter of logistics, once we move to the government-to-government dialogue, we will ask you to use the "Raise your Hand" function in the GoToWebinar app and I will be watching, and I will unmute you so that you can ask your questions during the session.

1:28

There will also be time for tribal leaders, who are on audio only, to be able to participate in the discussion, and when we do that, we will have to unmute all lines, and individuals will need to press star six.

1:45

This session is being recorded. If that is a problem for you, then you should drop off now as well.

1:51

Lastly, NTIA is also accepting and very much encourages, written comments. You can send those to BroadbandUSA@NTIA.gov. That e-mail address will be available on the PowerPoint slide. Please send them by February 11th.

2:11

In addition, this PowerPoint slide is also available at the Broadband USA website, and will also be available for you to download. So, with that, I would like to introduce NTIA's Associate Administrator for Broadband programs, Douglas Kinkoph

2:32

Thank you, Laura, and good day to everybody.

2:35

It is my honor to welcome you to the Tribal Consultation on the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program that was set up in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021.

2:45

The Act provides new sources of tribal broadband funding that can assist in mitigating the effects of Covid-19 pandemic, which is exacerbating the digital divide across Indian Country.

2:57

Congress, recognizing that Indian Country was hit hard with Covid-19, determined that a rapid response is needed.

3:05

The tribal consultation will be with primary tribal leaders or their designees and tribal stakeholders. Tribal consultations are off the record and not for press purposes.

3:15

I request that any press, drop off at this time, to ensure tribal leaders that stakeholders have the opportunity to participate.

3:22

The Department of Commerce and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) are dedicated to expanding broadband deployment in tribal lands, and rural America, in promoting digital inclusion.

3:36

Broadband is vital to education, health, economic and workforce development, culture, public safety, and much more.

3:43

We look forward to your comments on the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program and learning how we can work together to solve broadband access challenges in Indian Country.

3:53

We appreciate all the work tribes and tribal associations have accomplished to expand broadband and create awareness of the detrimental effects of the digital divide.

4:03

We recognize that each tribal government has its own challenges and priorities related to broadband infrastructure and we look forward to your comments on how we can make this program meet these needs.

4:15

We are committed to working with you to work on recovering resilience. We know that while these funds are a big step forward for tribal broadband, they are still insufficient to meet all broadband needs in Indian Country.

4:30

It is my privilege to introduce Council member, Joe Garcia, who will be providing the invocation today.

4:38

Council member Garcia was born and raised in Ohkay Owingeh he continues to serve his community in traditional educational, tribal government, and economic development efforts.

4:51

He has been actively involved in NCAI since 1995, serving two 2-year terms as the first Vice President of NCAI.

5:01

Prior to being elected President in November of 2005 and re-elected in 2007. He has also completed his third term as Governor of Ohkay Owingeh.

5:11

After his term as Governor, he was elected as Chairman of the All-Indian Pueblo Council (AIPC).

5:17

The organization, which was formed in 1598 serves in 19 Pueblos of New Mexico.

5:25

He served as chairman for 4 years, 2007 to 2010.

5:30

His most recent effort for Ohkay Owingeh, is a self-governance initiative, whereby the tribe runs all its BIA programs under self-determination.

5:40

In 2009, he became head councilmen by tradition, and will serve a lifetime in that capacity.

5:46

He is a member of the Tribal Leaders Task Force, a co-chair of the Tribal Technical Advisory Committee for Substance Abuse, and Mental Health Services Administration, and co-chair of the Tribal Transportation self-governance program.

6:00

Neg-Reg team Councilman Garcia, thank you for joining us today.

6:06

Thank you for that nice introduction and welcome, everybody.

6:12

I am honored that I was asked to provide the invocation this morning for the first session out of three sessions on the consultation.

[INVOCATION]

6:24

So, I will do so, with all due respect [Speaking Traditional Native language] ...

7:42

With all due respect, a brief translation is in order.

7:46

I will call upon the Spirit, Great Creator, the spirits of our ancestors, to be here with us today with this meeting consultation session established by the organization we are grateful that this is happening. It is a longtime coming with these kinds of efforts.

8:08

I will call upon the spirit to be here with us today, so that we can be in tune with what we need for our people, for our tribal land, for our tribal citizens, that this is a nation

8:25

That consists of many other nations.

8:26

All of the tribal nations in this country, and that this is a good effort.

8:33

And we thank the creators of this organization, and the creators of this session.

8:40

For moving forward with this, and we are looking forward to all of the input that will be provided by our tribal leaders and representatives, I call upon the Spirit, to bring us that courage, to bring us the mindset, to bring us the spiritual values, and the spiritual sense from our ancestors because their spirit is still here. I call upon the creator to invoke the spirits of our ancestors. Those that were knowledgeable, those that were heartfelt, and that we do this respectfully, that we do it together, and that we will be successful in our effort and

9:25

I call upon also for healing we need due to the Covid and that we will get over this.

9:36

We will win that war as well.

9:39

Just as we won all the other wars that we have been in and that we will remain strong, true to our people and to our line bases on behalf of myself, Ohkay Owingeh, I introduced myself as Sokuwa Owing Taa', that means mark of the misty lake and I open the meeting with respect and that will also be respectful in this session do all people who are in our line of business.

10:08

And that will also be respectful.

10:11

In this session, though, please speak your mind, speak your heart.

10:15

We will be successful for this session, and the upcoming session.

10:21

thank you very much.

[END OF INVOCATION]

10:23

Well, the floor is back open, and I believe Doug is going to continue from here...

10:37

Doug you are on mute.

10:41

Yes. Thank you, Councilman Garcia for both the moving invocation and the service to your Tribe.

10:47

At this time, I just want to highlight the agenda for today.

10:52

We will be finishing up here, the welcoming invocation, then I am just going to do, a very quick overview of the three Programs, given to NTI through the appropriations Act.

11:05

Then the team will pick it up and provide a deeper dive into the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Grant Program.

11:12

And then we will go through the government-to-government dialogue on that item set forth here, and then we will go over the logistics of responses, opportunity for tribes, and then close out around five o'clock.

11:27

So, with that let us go to the next slide, and I will give a quick overview on the three programs.

11:33

So, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 gave NTIA three grant programs.

11:40

The first being the discussion for today which is the Tribal Connectivity Grant Program which is to expand access and adoption, provide broadband service on broadband like broad tribal land and provide for remote learning, telework, telehealth resources.

11:59

During the pandemic. That is funded at one billion dollars.

12:04

The second program is the Broadband Infrastructure Deployment Grant.

12:08

And this is focused on providing grants for covered broadband projects defined as competitively and technologically neutral projects for the deployment of fixed broadband services and census blocks.

12:21

With at least one household or business that does not have access to 25 megabits download or 3 megabits upload.

12:29

Congress allocated \$300 million for this program and the last program, but not least is the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot program, which will result in us.

12:40

Providing grants to eligible recipients, and anchor communities for the purchase of broadband internet access or any eligible equipment or to hire or train information technology personnel.

12:51

And we have been allocated \$285 million for this program and I just quickly touched on these as tribal governments and tribal colleges will be eligible for these programs in different ways and I would just tell you to look for those as we move forward.

13:09

But today we are to focus on the tribal connectivity grants.

13:12

And I am now I am going to turn it over to Jennifer Duane.

13:18

Jennifer Duane is a Broadband Program Specialist for NTIA, Ms. Duane joined NTIA in 2009 to develop policy for the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP).

13:29

She has served as a senior attorney advisor in the Office of the Chief Counsel, providing legal advice, and general counsel to NTIA's offices, on a variety of telecommunications issues, such as information, technology, commercial, data, and privacy matters.

13:44

Most recently, she served as a senior advisor to the assistant secretary of NTIA on matters related to broadband to public safety. So, Jennifer, I will turn it over to you at this point.

13:56

Thanks, Doug.

13:57

And I am actually having a little bit of technical difficulties with our Citrix systems, So I am not able to turn on my camera or see the slides, but just from memory, the purpose of these next four slides is to just give a general overview of the of the tribal broadband connectivity program, and if you could turn to slide four Gilbert.

14:23

So, the first elements that the act defines are the, the eligible entities.

14:33

And the Act specifies five eligible entities, tribal government, tribal colleges and universities, Native Hawaiian, and Native Alaskan tribal organizations, Native corporations. So, this is going to be a key element of our discussion today.

14:53

We are interested in getting feedback from the tribes on how given these eligible entity definition, we can design a program that will really enable the tribes to achieve their broadband priorities through this program.

15:11

All right. Next slide, please.

15:15

Slide five talks about the tribal land.

15:20

The purpose of this grant program is to expand broadband access and adoption on tribal lands.

15:30

The act defined five asks that are components of tribal land.

15:36

I will not run through the five different components, but that will be a key topic of discussion later on in the government-to-government dialogue.

15:52

Slide six, please.

15:57

So, the, this slide gives the funding uses of the program.

16:05

The Act really defines broad, eligible uses for the program.

16:13

The main components are broadband infrastructure deployment, and also broadband adoption activities.

16:20

So, then we see the Act as being very broad in scope as to the eligible uses for this program.

16:34

And there also is an administrative expense limitation

16:39

Only, 2%.

16:48

of the grant funds can be used for any administrative expenses and there is a limitation. And then there is a priority for broadband infrastructure to deploy on unserved.

17:06

Tribal lands. We will get into that discussion too later in the dialogue.

17:12

Slide seven.

17:18

And we just wanted to point out a couple of other considerations on this slide, that equitable allocation is a key element of the statute.

17:30

And that is something that we really want to hear from the tribes on how we can best go about ensuring that this statutory requirement is met and how we can go about ensuring that there is an equitable distribution of this funding.

17:48

The other key areas I want to point out is that the Act establishes very aggressive timelines. NTIA has no limited time to establish the requirements for this program once we release our, notice the funding opportunity (NOFO)

18:10

Applicants have 90 days to submit an application, also within six months tribes need to expend that money.

18:25

And there is also a commitment deadline or expenditure deadline, and those are all topics of this discussion as well.

18:41

So, on slide eight, starts the government-to-government dialogue and to lead the government or government dialogue. I would like to turn this over to Adam Geisler.

18:52

Adam is the National Tribal Government Liaison with the First Responder Network Authority serving Western tribes in FEMA Regions 9 and 10.

19:02

He is a member of the La Jolla band of Luiseno

19:05

Indians near San Diego, California and has served in an elected leadership role with the tribe, running tribal government and shaping national policy in public health, transportation, economic development, and housing for over a decade.

19:22

NTIA is very fortunate to have Adam working with us on this program and the expertise he brings to this, so, Adam, over to you.

19:31

Great. Thank you, Jennifer. Can everybody hear me?

19:35

Jennifer, can you hear me? OK? I know you are probably coming off of mute. I can, yes.

19:39

Yes, I can, well, [Traditional Native language]

19:43

[Traditional Native language], I am Adam Geisler, [Traditional Native language]

19:51

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this process.

19:55

It is an exciting day for Indian Country, and it is an honor to be a part of the dialogue that we are going to have here.

20:01

In a government-to-government consultation format.

20:08

I also just wanted to point out for those of you that may see me in a different capacity at times that I am here today, providing support as a subject matter expert to NTIA, as NTIA continues to implement all these exciting, new grant programs.

20:24

And, in particular, the one that we are going to be discussing today, that has such broad reaching and possible positive impacts for Indian Country.

20:35

As we go through the slides today, we have quite a few folks on the line, and we want to be respectful of everybody's time. I do want to remind everybody that we do want to hear from tribal leaders. First and foremost, this is meant to be a government-to-government discussion.

20:54

Also, as we go through, we are going to go through each of these areas, and then open up the bridge. We will talk about how we are going to do that once we get done, but we will go into the overview.

21:04

One thing I do want to point out, is that the intent here is, really, to get your feedback.

21:11

I have sat in a number of consultations in the past as an elected leader, myself.

21:15

And I know how it can feel at times, when you are looking to try to get answers to programs that may already have the parameters defined.

21:25

And I think what is exciting about this opportunity that we are looking at today is that today, we really are trying to get the feedback directly from you on how to make this a program that is going to be beneficial and equitable for Indian Country.

21:38

And so, please, as you think about the responses, as we go through each of these topic areas, please think about how, if you had the ability to write the NOFO or write the parameters on how we would deploy this in a way that is going to help and bring a level of equity to Indian Country.

21:56

Think about it in that context because the cake is not baked yet.

22:00

And it is important that you share the critical ingredients that you see as part of this process.

22:06

I also want to, recognize that that the legislation that we are talking about is tied to the response elements related to Covid-19 and I do want to recognize the impacts to Indian Country that we have seen today and recognize the tenacity that Indian Country has brought to addressing the pandemic and the needs of your people of our people.

22:34

And I thank you, Councilman Garcia for those words and keeping everybody centered and grounded as we think through the solutions that we need to bring today to make this a good program.

22:45

Additionally, one of the biggest goals that I think we have, is to listen to the things that you want and need, in order to make this successful. We also want to make sure that we have the ability to understand the larger need.

23:06

A billion dollars is a great start, and, for those of you that have been working in this space, we all recognize that a billion dollars is a starting point, and not the total need, that there is an order just to address the digital divide across Indian Country today.

23:22

Also, please keep in mind that we are working within the parameters of the statute, and of the law, or of the legislation. And that there are some components of this that are time driven, based upon the language.

23:37

And so, we appreciate your patience as we are quickly pulling together these consultations and trying to meet the timelines that are set forth, to get the NOFO out.

23:50

So, we can start getting these dollars into Indian Country and address the needs that you have already going on today with telehealth, education, community, economic development, and digital inclusion, just to name a few items.

24:03

So, we will today cover program eligibility as a topic: equitable distribution.

24:10

We definitely want to hear your feedback around the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and NEPA and ...

24:18

Make sure that we are being competent about the cultural resource elements that are involved in this type of a conversation.

24:25

This exciting conversation, as well as we are going to get into the unserved areas and what that means, and how we are going to look to prioritize these dollars in these different buckets.

24:37

And then lastly, we will dive into the reporting elements, that, I am just going to say it right now. We realize that Covid has created a strain on a lot of the tribal economies. And that also means on the staff.

24:52

And the intent here is to really think through a good reporting process that makes life easy for you, but also meets the needs of the reporting elements that we need to keep in mind at the government.

25:06

So, we are going to go through each of these topics, and we will wrap this by opening up the bridge and hearing from the tribal leaders on the line today about what you see as the solutions for these, what you see is the answers for these topics.

25:24

And so, again, we will go through all of these, and then we will address that as we get to, the back.

25:31

So, if we could please move to the next slide.

25:35

We will jump into one of the areas that I know is a point of interest for all of you given other legislation that has been out there and the responses that we have seen.

25:56

In terms of context of this program, we will address program eligibility as it relates to the who and the what, and you will see the language copied and pasted right there from the statute.

26:09

And, you know, clearly, there is a lot of flexibility within the who is eligible.

26:15

But I think that the bigger component that we really want to pick everybody's brain about and understand your perspective, is how should we look?

26:24

Or how should NTIA look at the implementation of a program when we start looking at eligibility and how can we ensure that the needs of the tribe are being met through the application process?

26:39

And as part of that discussion, I would encourage you to think about should each tribal government be limited to one application, or one application per entity?

26:52

And I think the driver behind that is, we realize that a number of you are part of consortiums in one form or another, and that when you are a part of a consortium, often times you joined those consortiums via resolution, and that consortium plays a role on behalf of your government. It falls underneath the umbrella, and it can be an extension of your tribe's government.

27:14

But we also want to be cognizant of the potential for a tribe to apply for this individually, as well as through a consortium.

27:25

And so, the question is, what happens when we receive applications coming from tribes, where they are supporting the application process, both individually and through a consortium? And how do we prioritize that?

27:41

Should we only accept one application based upon the tribal's submission and where do you put that?

27:49

So, again, food for thought. How would you like us to process that?

27:54

Also, we are looking at what types of projects should be eligible? We know a lot of you are looking at how you can collaboratively approach this, which is an exciting thing to see.

28:03

We also know that some of you are looking at doing this individually, and collaborations based on your environment, or where you are at, just really is not in the cards for the solutions that you are looking for.

28:16

How do we prioritize those?

28:21

And then, lastly, how should we look at how should NTIA address the use of the federal funds in that same manner?

28:29

And I think this all really comes back to, we realize that there is plenty of eligibility here, but the tough part that we are all looking at is how do we prioritize this based upon what you see as the needs and the priority areas that are going to have the best solutions for Indian Country.

28:47

As an aside, you will also note that when you were reading through the statute, you may notice in the definitions that tribal organizations were not fully defined.

28:59

That I think in part is due to the fact that it has been previously defined in 25 U.S. Code.

29:04

So, for those of you that may have had that question, we did want to just make sure that we highlighted that as part of this discussion.

29:11

So, again, towards the back, and we start to open up, I am hoping that you can address and bring your comments in a way that addresses it by topic area.

29:19

It is not a requirement, but we would ask that you do your best to try to fit your responses within these topic areas to help inform foremost on some of these items.

29:31

We also realized that there is going to be more here that we may not have covered, and, we also do want to hear that, Next slide.

29:40

So, now, this brings us to a place that I think is another element that we are really wanting to hear from you about the equitable distribution discussion.

29:51

The act directs NTIA to provide funds on an equitable basis to tribes, and NTIA is seeking input for how we look at what equitable means.

30:04

Indian Country is in so many different places right now.

30:07

When you look at the broadband needs, whether you are talking about all of the folks that we have up in Alaska or down, you know, in the, literally in the opposite corner of the United States, and even out to Hawaii, your needs are different.

30:20

And so, how can we create an application process, and frankly, a program that that brings people along collectively in a way that empowers everybody to have an opportunity for success with this program?

30:36

How can NTIA ensure equitable distribution of the funds?

30:41

And we do have some ideas here on the slide for you to ponder.

30:45

We have all lived through formula distributions, and is that a methodology that you think is something that we should be exploring here?

30:55

Is there an alternative to a formula distribution possibly an upfront allocation?

31:01

Is there a component of that that maybe should be competitive in this application or for needs-based competitiveness? A competitive/needs space?

31:13

Or do you see an application process that addresses equitability, that has a combination of these items, potentially, an upfront allocation of some kind, plus a competitive or needs based element of the application?

31:30

So, is there a way that we can meet the equitable distribution component by leveraging a couple of different ways to distribute the dollars that Indian Country truly needs today.

31:48

With that, I hope that everybody here is thinking about what we really do want to understand, is what is a good way that you see that we can be looking at to measure need? Should every tribe receive a standard allocation for planning, for example?

32:02

Or other eligible expenses.

32:06

And if those tribes already have planning or eligible expenses covered, should we look at using the balance, and in a more competitive, or needs based platform for implementing the plan?

32:20

Tough discussion, when we look at look at equitability, and we want to hear from you.

32:26

So please, if you can, share with us what you think the right answer is, if you were to write the NOFO, because that is what we are here to do today, is get that feedback.

32:34

Next slide, please.

32:40

This is another important area that we know we want to hear from you, we know it is, relevant, and it is important.

32:51

These projects are those that, we know everybody is looking at, are going to have an environmental component to them. So, obviously, we have to be looking at all the federal elements associated with that.

33:01

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) reminds us how we are looking at cultural resources and, making sure that we are keeping the protection of those resources in mind and meeting the cultural elements of the tribe.

33:18

So, for discussion, when we are talking about this topic area, do you have suggestions for expediting the environmental process?

33:28

And for those of you that that probably read this and take pause, I do want to just point out that that the intent here, there is a lot of other things, that have gone on in previous programs. I know that there was a lot of frustration that came out of the small cell waivers that happened in the past, and that is not what we are getting out when we asked this question.

33:48

Again, the legislation is founded on a place to address the need as a result of the impacts of Covid.

33:55

And so, when we talk about these networks that everybody is wanting to get stood up and these exciting solutions that Indian Country wants to bring into their communities.

34:05

How do we do that in a way?

34:07

That that that is expediting it based upon your need. So, I want to make that really clear, this is not to try to find a way to circumvent.

34:15

It is really coming from a place of, we realized that Covid is here, the needs are here, the children need access, your governments need access, your health facilities, obviously, need access.

34:28

And so, what is the way that we can look at getting speed to deployment, to those that need it in a culturally competent way?

34:39

Do you also have the resources today to address the requirements of NEPA? We realize that a number of you have been impacted by Covid

34:52

My tribe itself has been impacted by Covid and we are seeing, and we know that there are 60-70% hits to your economy.

34:59

And so, do you see a need for some of these dollars to go towards environmental and planning components around the needs and the deployment of the networks?

35:11

What should NTIA be aware of with regards to historic preservation, and how we might be able to improve the process? And I am going to say that again.

35:19

What are things that we can do to him to improve and empower Indian Country and the cultural resource protections, the environmental protections that you think are relevant to discussion?

35:33

And then, what should we be aware of when it comes down to the cultural pieces that may be your biggest concerns.

35:43

We realized that when we start talking about these topics, broadband, infrastructure, that there is a traditionalist or a cultural component to this, that we want to be cognizant of and so we wanted to just ask that question.

36:00

With these new technologies being deployed every day, what are the biggest environmental or cultural resource concerns that you may have with this program that we need to be making sure that we are addressing?

36:15

So, there you go: topic area three. Again, think about how you would like to respond to topic area three.

36:23

We really do want your input and guidance.

36:28

Next slide, please.

36:31

Another fun one, the unserved area topic, so the Act stipulates the grant funds, be prioritized unserved areas in households and a household is considered unserved if it lacks access to qualifying broadband service.

36:47

Further, the Act states that the Assistant Secretary shall award a grant to each eligible entity that submits an application that the Assistant Secretary approves for consultation with the Commission to prevent duplication of funding.

37:01

This is another really critical component to this discussion that we want to understand how NTIA can ensure that the grant funds are prioritized to the unserved areas on tribal lands.

37:17

If you look to the right bottom right corner of the slide when we talk about what it means in terms of unserved, the definition, at least at this point, within the statute, is 25 megabits of download speed is the baseline. So, you need to be able to, at least be having 25 download speed.

37:40

We are also talking about; it also delineates an element here of

37:45

Upload speeds of not less than 3 megabits per second, and then the third element of this is another space that we would like to hear a little bit more from you.

37:57

Especially those of you that are using wireless type solutions. Maybe you are not tied into fiber, maybe you are using a satellite service or a microwave type service.

38:09

And in terms of latency, what is sufficient in order to support real-time applications?

38:16

Some of you out there that are wondering what I just said with the 25-download speed and the 3 megabits upload speeds.

38:24

And if that sounds as if I am speaking a foreign language to you right now, Think about it in this context.

38:31

If you cannot sit down and stream on your laptop today or you are able to have, those services that allow for streaming and high data usage.

38:44

Then there is a strong likelihood that you would be considered an unserved area.

38:52

So, to continue and expand upon that, what is one of the best ways to demonstrate if an area is unserved?

39:02

Do you have a different take or a more expanded take on what you see as unserved in your community? Because, that may differ, or may expand upon, what is already in statute?

39:16

And we want to know how you see, or how you define that.

39:22

And, again, what thresholds would constitute unserved?

39:26

So, again, this is topic area four.

39:35

These are the tough conversations we have to have, but I am also excited that we are having it. So, again, unserved areas and how would you define that?

39:42

What does unserved mean to you and how should we look at developing those parameters to make sure that we have a level of equity with the Program?

39:52

Topic, Area five, please.

39:57

Reporting requirements, Ok, so, understanding there is a need for transparency.

40:02

In the use of the federal funds, NTIA is seeking input on the reporting requirements that are, not going to be overly burdensome, but we also want to make sure that we are allowing for the public to be informed about how the federal funds are being utilized.

40:19

We also realize that a number of you are hoping to see some data that comes out of this, the same way that we are in the reporting.

40:27

And so, how can we implement a reporting process that is respectful based upon where you are at as a tribe.

40:36

The things that you are dealing with related to the pandemic and making sure that this is not an overly burdensome function, but at the same time we can still capture the information that we need.

40:48

I am also going to add one more component to that, which is I am going to come back and say, how can we also use the reporting process to identify and really start to quantify that need of Indian Country to solve the digital divide?

41:05

So, with that, we will, move on to the next slide.

41:12

So, additional feedback.

41:16

So, now we are going to move into the to the part that where we want to hear from you about these topic areas directly. Please also do not feel like you are confined to these topic areas.

41:28

They are meant to be a guidepost for this conversation, and I, we recognize that there may be items beyond this that you want to share and please do.

41:42

I am going to ask that one more time that as you provide your comments today that for those of you that are not speaking on behalf of your tribe or your tribal government or do not have that authority to do so, we are going to ask that you reserve the floor and the time for the tribal leaders to provide their comments.

42:04

For, for those of you that are going to be providing comment today, we are establishing a record as part of this process to inform the NOFO.

42:14

And we do ask that you say your name, your title, and who you are representing, and in the event that you have the authorization from the tribe that you are representing, can you also make clear that you have the authority to be speaking on their behalf?

42:32

Because, again, we are engaging in a government-to-government dialogue here, and it is important that we uphold that relationship between the United States Government and those that fall within the trust responsibility of the United States Government

42:46

So, if we could go to the next slide, please, Gilbert.

42:53

All right.

42:54

So, I am going to leave the topic areas up.

42:58

I also want to point out that in the chat box, you will see a link to the slides that we went over today in case you are, obviously you cannot, you are not able to control the slide deck here, so if you want to go back to the slides. We do have a link in the chat to pull those up.

43:19

And the way that we are going to work our way through this today is if you can start by raising your hand in the text box.

43:30

And so, we are going to start with those that are on the GoToMeeting platform that are using the application.

43:37

And then once we make our way through those, on the go to meeting process, we will then open up the phone bridge for those that are, unable to use the application and are dialing in via phone.

43:49

Again, tribal leaders, if you could try to keep your comments to between 3 to 5 minutes to be respectful of others, that also want to share 573 federally recognized tribes, and there is only so much time.

44:07

I also want to remind you that if you are not comfortable, or you are not prepared to share your comments today, that we have two more sessions coming up, next Wednesday, the 10th, and Friday the 12th, same time.

44:19

And we would encourage you to come back to those, and also, if you wish to submit your responses in writing, we will have the email link to where you can submit your responses in writing at the end of the consultation.

44:34

So, with that, Laura, if we could go ahead and start with, any of our attendees that have their hands up.

44:47

Yes, we have got 4 or 5 folks with their hands up. I am going to try to get them in order, and we will unmute them as we go. So, I am starting with Aaron Payment. I have unmuted your line if you would like to ask a question or make a comment.

45:06

Can you hear me now?

45:08

Yes, I can hear you.

45:10

Well, hello [Traditional Native language] I am the chairperson.

45:15

for the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Dr. Aaron Payment.

45:19

So, I will limit my comments today to equitable distribution in formula.

45:27

and I will be joining some of the other calls, but, so, you know, we just went through the CARES Act, and there was some consultation.

45:36

So, you know, we just went through this, so it is kind of fresh, and a lot of tribes were concerned during that process. A lot of different ideas came out.

45:47

The size of your tribe, how many employees, your land base, a number of different criteria, tribes had suggested. We do understand the complexity because tribes are very diverse.

46:02

My tribe is a land poor tribe because we were recognized late.

46:06

And so, we have less land than some very small tribes that are, like, 1/120th of our size just because of when they were recognized. So, relying just on one criteria is not an equitable solution.

46:20

Also, while we had advocated, several tribes advocated your tribal membership size should have something to do with it. I think that should play a big portion of the criteria.

46:33

We ended up being told or “voluntold” that we would use the Indian Housing Block Grant Statistic, which, in my case, my tribe’s case that worked out well, because we are progressive. And we started trying to maximize that number over 25 years ago.

46:51

But for other tribes that have not, it was a disadvantage for them in the Cares Act Distribution.

46:56

So, you know, there seems to be a continued paternalism from the federal government to not respect our sovereignty and our ability to give you our enrollment number. We have enrollment numbers that are pretty accurate or more accurate than anything the federal government has.

47:12

You know, the politics of per capita in blood quantum, and service delivery, and all of that mix means that we have a very streamlined minimized, enrollment number to be a member of a tribe, and it is the most reliable number from a tribal perspective.

47:28

So, I am thinking, maybe 50% based on population, this is just formulating.

47:36

And then also 30% of our total amount that could qualify, based on connectivity, or the lack thereof. And obviously, that will then factor in if tribes have a large reservation base, they have a large area that they need to cover for connectivity, and it also would factor in or should factor in tribes that have checkerboard reservations that have reservation holdings. You know, my tribe has reservation holdings all across the Upper Peninsula.

48:06

It is three hours from one, a tribal office to another. And our service delivery is to everybody. And so, it should not be limited that way. So maybe 50% per population, 30% for connectivity, and then another 20% through an RFPQ.

48:21

And so that would allow a tribe to write 20% of it, be based on their unique needs and their tribe.

48:27

But it could be, again, their tribal capacity, telemedicine, tele-behavioral health, which is very important, especially during a pandemic and not forgetting about another crisis, the crisis of the opiate, and then leave a tribe the ability to create the justification under that additional 20%. So, this plan would be for 100%, and it would allow for maximum flexibility for our tribe of respecting our sovereignty to get a portion based on population based on our identified need to fill that gap with broadband and then a 20% based on our FAQ.

49:07

So that is it. All I want to say today. I probably took up my time, and if there's time later, I will circle back up with some additional comments. Thank you.

49:17

Thank you, Chairman. Thank you.

49:22

Just as a reminder to everybody we are recording this. And there will be a transcript that comes out of this so in case any of you are wondering how fast I can write with my pen. I want to assure you that we are going to be capturing all of this, but thank you, Chairman. And thank you for your comments on behalf the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe.

49:38

Laura, what do we have here?

49:40

Hi, yes, we have Francisco Simbana, I have your line unmuted now.

49:52

Francisco.

50:01

I am not sure. I hopefully you can hear us. We cannot quite hear you.

50:05

We had you for a minute.

50:18

Maybe, Francisco stepped away for a moment.

50:22

We will come back.

50:29

All right. Let us keep going.

50:32

All right. I have got Henry Cagey if you could say the tribe that you are representing today.

50:44

Oh, I think he is still on mute.

50:50

And I believe you tell it self-mute, Henry?

51:02

Let us give them just a minute to be sure.

51:08

Still got 2 or 3 more folks Henry?

51:19

Alright, We'll try to come back to Henry Cagey as well.

51:24

OK.

51:26

And next, I have got Reggie Tupponce.

51:36

I unmuted your line.

51:45

two.

51:46

Everyone, my name is Reggie Tupponce, the Tribal Administrator for the Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe in Virginia. My tribe as well as five other tribes in Virginia

51:59

attained our federal acknowledgment through legislation that was passed in 2018. We currently have an application in the 2.5 gigahertz priority window, but in some communications with FCC, they are insinuating that tribal lands because none of us have trust land at this point.

52:25

Although, in our bill, it does specify that we can take land into trust and then identify it.

52:35

It also says that we have all the rights of a federally recognized tribe, notwithstanding, not having trust land. So, my concern in how it is written is that it seems that it would exclude us since we do not have reservation land at this point.

52:53

At this point, my tribe currently has a land into trust application for two parcels of land and per our bill, it is a mandatory trust application and so that is basically what I have to say, and the other five tribes that are on a bill would be in the same predicament two of the other tribes Monacan Indian Nation and the Rappahannock Indian nation.

53:26

We are working as a consortium on the 2.5 gigahertz priority window.

53:33

And we are in a rural area where most of our people do not have high speed internet, they are dependent on satellite. And it is an issue, especially with kids. not in school, because they are having to go sit in the school parking lot to have Wi-Fi access and so on.

53:56

that is basically all I have to say. Thank you for your time.

54:01

Thank you, Reggie. We will definitely take that into consideration. We do have that noted.

54:08

So, we will work on finding a way to answer that question for you. Thank you.

54:15

All right, Laura. Thank you, Reggie. And Robert Gray, I have unmuted your line if you tell us what tribe you are representing and share your comments.

54:29

Chief Robert Gray from the Pamunkey Indian Tribe. I share some of the concerns that Reggie just gave, but I also have concerns of unserved areas.

54:44

Our area FCC RDOF we have a company that obtained an auction for our area. Via the RDOF but we cannot make contact with the company and find out what their plans are.

54:59

And I am concerned that this program will run into problems because these companies with the RDOF. I would also add that as far as program eligibility, unserved areas we are a tribe where even tribal offices, do not have broadband.

55:20

Our government and our tribal government do not have broadband access.

55:25

And I believe that needs to be considered a priority in addition to our tribal citizens, because we cannot serve our citizens properly without broadband ourselves. So, thank you for the opportunity to speak.

55:42

Thank you, Chief Gray, and we have definitely captured those. And thank you for your feedback.

55:52

Yes, Thank you. And next up, I have, Will Micklin, I have your line unmuted, if you would like to share your comments or ask a question.

56:05

Hi, Will Micklin, can you hear me?

56:11

So, [Traditional Native Language] second, Vice President, Central Council of the United Tribes of Alaska.

56:24

Also, CEO of the Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians, the couple of questions.

56:30

I have submitted written questions. I will submit some more written.

56:35

I will just be brief on this.

56:39

Then rather than go through the questions, I will just provide recommendations which will imply the discussion, and a couple of recommendations.

56:55

The proceeds from the tribal grants be allowed to be used as, for the nonfederal share, satisfy the nonfederal share of other broadband programs like a community to connect or reconnect program under USDA or other programs, whether they are from FCC or BIA.

57:26

Those typically have a large, non-federal share requirement, so our tribal match up to 50% and it would be most helpful if we could leverage those programs with this program.

57:41

I do not see a prohibition on it in the act, and that interpretation would be favorable to tribes.

57:50

I am very hopeful the interpretation for this program does not require that the covered area or the tribal lands.

58:08

have no overlay of other grant proceeds, USDA Rural Connectivity pilot program, USDA Reconnect program, Title six, Rev Rural Electrification, Community Connect Program, RDOF, the CARES Act.

58:34

We have had problems where, proceeds from broadband grants in the area that have not been used to deploy broadband in tribal areas. Although, awarded for that area, typically a census area, count against the tribe, then prohibit the award of funds for those purposes.

58:59

And I would recommend the secretary not take an interpretation that any award in the census area

59:07

Or the covered area or the tribal lands, whatever definition is used, that would preclude use of funds for the tribal a program.

59:17

I do recommend that the qualifying Broadband Service, that 25 megabits 3 megabits be the floor.

59:33

That has been exceeded in many areas but typically not provided in tribal areas where are just hopeful that the interpretation be not to favor, applications or deployments that are at the low end and would allow higher speed connections

1:00:01

For unserved area we do recommend that they be certified by the tribe. Tribes have consistently and uniformly testified before the USDA and FCC, and BIA, that the broadband deployment maps are inaccurate, that many carriers assert coverage over tribal areas that do not exist.

1:00:22

And rather than relying on those maps, we recommend self-certification by the tribe, and affirmation, by the awarding entity, if that is in doubt.

1:00:35

We have a number of other recommendations.

1:00:39

The only one I will touch upon is allocation.

1:00:42

The [inaudible] Reservation is unserved.

1:00:48

It is off grid entirely.

1:00:51

Many villages in south-east Alaska are underserved or if served are served only for a specific program purpose and are overcharged remarkably for that service, many hundreds of dollars, for 10 up and 1 down, for example.

1:01:17

So, we think that the unserved should be expansive and include both favorable funding to unserved and underserved communities so that there is wider deployment rather than just to anchor institutions which are typically IHS or some specific program or some other e-rate or library fund.

1:01:45

We are hoping the allocation is based on the merit, and only secondarily on population.

1:01:56

Many underserved and unserved tribes require a very expensive middle mile deployment which is disproportionate to the customer pool. If there were sufficient customers there would be service there already.

1:02:09

Typically, it is the small population and the large cost of middle mile to backhaul the backbone into the community for last mile deployment.

1:02:21

That is a huge problem.

1:02:22

And this program should help fund that, knowing that the costs the middle mile can be not tracked to population, so, we hope that low population will not disqualify from funding for a necessary component of deployment, which is middle mile.

1:02:48

I will reserve my others for the next meetings and also for written submissions.

1:02:52

Thank you very much and good to see you Vice President Micklin. Thank you again for your comments and your feedback.

1:03:03

Thank you for your candor.

1:03:06

And again, for everyone on the line, for those of you that may have had conversations prior to the engagement that we are having today, Again, the comments and feedback that we receive both verbally through this process, as well as in written format, are critical too.

1:03:27

Creating a baseline or a record for us to look to develop the program. And so, thank you, Vice President Micklin, for being able to be so succinct with your comments.

1:03:39

Appreciate the feedback, thank you.

1:03:41

Adam, we have got a number of folks, queued up. So, I just want to let folks know that I have got you in the queue next.

1:03:50

I have, Paula, I think it is [inaudible], I will let your pronunciation of that name wrong and tell us who you are representing.

1:03:59

I had Brian McDonald, Matt Tomas, and Peter McCaslin in that order so, Paula, I will unmute your line.

1:04:12

And, Paula, you should be, we should be able to hear you now.

1:04:22

This is Joe Garcia; I would like to go after that list you just provided

1:04:29

Not a problem, councilman Garcia.

1:04:37

Paula, are you coming through, OK?

1:04:50

Alright, I am going to come back. I am trying to keep a good list. I will come back to Paula.

1:04:57

And go to Brian McDonald. I will be unmuting your line.

1:05:03

Brian, your line is unmuted if you could ask us.

1:05:09

Sure, I am Brian MacDonald with the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Nation in Boulder, Wisconsin.

1:05:20

The question is more geared to, we already have a project in place we are funding a large deployment and is there a possibility to recoup some of the funds for the tribe?

1:05:35

Based on the rollout of the fiber project covering the community and the backhaul.

1:05:46

So, Mr. McDonald, This is a project that you guys started during Covid?

1:05:54

Yes, it was something that was started to cover telehealth. We are an underserved area. There was DSL that was minimal at best, had been working with an engineering firm to get things moving.

1:06:11

And then with Covid coming, started moving it along at a quicker rate to cover the telehealth and the educational needs.

1:06:20

Gotcha. Do you mind sharing an example of the expenses that you would be looking to try to recoup?

1:06:28

We have roughly \$300,000 in engineering fees and the total project itself is going to be roughly \$5 million.

1:06:43

And so, you are looking to, and then your pre-development, or, or your planning expenses? The planning expenses, and we are actually in the process of deployment, we started laying fiber before the weather got hold of us.

1:07:01

Then we also have the 2.5 gigahertz wireless spectrum we are still waiting for.

1:07:16

approval on that will cover areas where we just cannot afford to get fiber. Just for context in this area the going rate for a mile of fiber is \$55,000.

1:07:35

Thank you.

1:07:40

I am sorry. Can you repeat, did you have another question, or was that someone else? I was just asking, Mr. McDonald, if you had any additional comments? No, that was it.

1:07:51

That was it, I was just curious if there would be an opportunity to recoup.

1:07:55

Gotcha.

1:07:58

Again, we are collecting the feedback, so I apologize, I do not mean to be rude if I do not respond to that.

1:08:04

I think that this is all part of that process of understanding, so thank you. Appreciate the feedback. Thank you.

1:08:13

Thank you. And next, I have Matt Tomas. Give me a minute, and I will unmute your line.

1:08:25

Matt Tomas your line has been unmuted if you would like to share your comments.

1:08:37

Are you able to hear me?

1:08:44

I am actually the grant writer for the Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake, located in Lake County, California.

1:08:53

We are 1 of 7 federally recognized tribes.

1:08:57

Yes, I want to reinforce Will's concerns, and problems he had about the area maps for the providers it is very difficult to get accurate maps about where they actually provide coverage.

1:09:13

And our old rancheria is located in the middle of one zip code area.

1:09:19

Most of it gets high speed Internet Service.

1:09:23

But it is unclear, and they have not been able to provide me very good answers about additional costs, and maybe I am just talking to the wrong people, but I would think that if we can get more accurate maps about where the service areas are, then we would have a better idea of what, middle mile cost would be to expand this service.

1:09:46

That is a problem, and I have also had some ideas about maybe how to streamline the environmental review process.

1:09:55

Our Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) has been working to get this unique GIS based program that has an inventory of all archeological works in an area and.

1:10:10

You can click in the area and create a radius, and all those existing reports come up and I will provide more detail in some comments later.

1:10:18

But one way I would like, at least, knowing that you may be coming up with some problems is if you had access to this database.

1:10:25

And you had a sense of where the alignment would be if you are laying in fiber.

1:10:31

You can anticipate where you might have some issues about archeological monitoring and things like that, but we do not have that capability yet right now.

1:10:41

But we are working towards that. Is that effort directly with the Tribe itself or are you working in a consortium?

1:10:52

No, it is our own effort Robert is our new THPO and he is worked for another tribe two counties over, but he has come back to Lake County. I think that subscription is by one firm, unfortunately, but they have this unique program, and they have collected all the archeological reports out there.

1:11:14

And they make it available for like \$30,000.

1:11:17

If you have a monopoly on that, it is kind of price gouging, but anyway we are working on getting that kind of function in our office.

1:11:30

It is the service providers that do not provide very clear information and it is not clear to us.

1:11:37

in terms of how much it costs for that last line.

1:11:42

we are having trouble with that. I should also say that the State of California PUC they have an existing program, Grant Program for tribes offer funding to at least do, feasibility studies to determine, you know, how much that would cost.

1:12:04

They are also providing funding to established market studies and also to develop business plans, come with some of the tribes, we are thinking about creating publicly owned utilities, they would control, and if they could establish that others around neighbors do not have that service could

1:12:25

Tap into that utility function, so those are just ideas and comments. Thank you very much.

1:12:33

Thank you, Mr. Tomas and you know, I send my best to the folks in.

1:12:38

the Upper Lake region we know that the wildfires over the last few years have been another challenge that you have been battling.

1:12:48

I got evacuated twice last year, so thank you for your thoughts.

1:12:56

So, I get, definitely pulling out of that.

1:12:58

Your feedback, that some of the challenges you have not even being able to do the preplanning, and it sounds like maybe a technical assistance element is also part of the, of what you are describing. Is that fair to say? I do not want to put words in anybody's mouth.

1:13:12

with the California PUC program.

1:13:19

We are supposed to engage the technical communications consultants, which is a reimbursable costs later.

1:13:25

We engage consultant to help prepare the application and the feasibility study proposal to be considered for funding.

1:13:33

And then, once that work is completed, we then just ask for reimbursement.

1:13:40

At that point.

1:13:41

So, it is like, we put the money upfront.

1:13:44

Then you get reimbursed once the work is completed.

1:13:47

I will send the information about the California PUC Program as well.

1:13:52

Maybe you guys can glean some information or ideas from them.

1:13:57

Thank you.

1:14:00

Thank you, Mr. Tomas. I do think that Mr. Tomas points out a good thing for consideration in your feedback and comments as well.

1:14:08

For those of you that are looking at, in terms of collaboration, are you also, as you are approaching this process, thinking about your application, are you looking at leveraging state partners or regional partners?

1:14:22

I think Mr. Tomas gave a couple good examples of that, and so if you have any feedback along those lines, please also feel free to add that into your comments, so we can get a good sense of the types of resources. Because it is going to be different in every state. You are all going to have different types of things at the state level, or regional level that maybe is not at the national level. It would be good to have an awareness of that, if you are open to sharing that.

1:14:49

So, thank you, Mr. Tomas. Laura?

1:14:52

Thank you.

1:15:03

Laura, do we still have you?

1:15:07

Apologies, I was talking unmute and trying to figure out Peter McCaslin is up next, but I cannot tell if he has audio.

1:15:19

Mr. McCaslin, are you on the line?

1:15:37

OK, let us see if we can come back to that, and we will put him on the, why, do not we build a list, Laura, and then we will come back one more time as we, as we conclude.

1:15:48

Exactly, and keeping those, as well. So, next, I had Chuck Reese, Chuck I will be.

1:15:56

Unmuting your line.

1:15:59

Mr. Reese.

1:16:01

Yes, ma'am, can you hear me?

1:16:04

Yes, sir, we can.

1:16:07

My name is Chuck Reese I am the infrastructure administrator with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes here in Pablo, Montana.

1:16:15

We are on the checkerboard reservation about one point three million acres.

1:16:21

We do have a main corridor the Highway 93 corridor glacier corridor that goes from Missoula clear into Canada, through Glacier Park in that area.

1:16:33

And then we have another highway that cuts around the West side of the reservation over in our Canvas area, Highway 206.

1:16:41

It is actually the perfect ring, if you will, to expand out our network.

1:16:46

We did use the CARES funding, and we were fully granted the 2-5 network. We were able to meet the December 31st deadline, even though it was extended, it was kind of crazy. But we were able to build 480-foot carrier grade towers, all fed with fiber generators, 27 micro pops.

1:17:13

It was a heck of a challenge, but we did get it.

1:17:16

But like a lot of tribes, you know, up until 4 or 5 years ago, we were fairly complacent with telecommunications. And just, you know, kind of worked with what we had in the local exchanges and where we could build short runs of fiber for our campus networks and stuff we did, as necessary.

1:17:34

As the funding sources came available, we realized some of them, we did not even have the minimum infrastructure nor support to even meet the minimum requirements for some of those funding sources until the Cares Act came along.

1:17:50

Then, you know, as we are diving further into this and networking with other tribes and folks like Denae Wilson, Mariel Tricks that are just awesome at what they do and kind of getting people lined out.

1:18:04

We came on pretty strong in doing.

1:18:06

So, we are also seeing where we are short as far as funding sources and sustainability of these networks.

1:18:16

Right now, with the towers, we were able to bring the fiber from on tribal land at the top of these high points down to these corridors, but then we are subject to the local exchanges.

1:18:29

You know, we have to pay them a premium for transport on their existing fiber facilities to get it back to our tribal headquarters, to their transport, our network, out to those towers, to be able to broadcast that network.

1:18:47

The problem we are having is the closest Internet hotel is in Missoula and that is like 70 miles away.

1:18:56

And we need to get that connected directly to a carrier so that we can get our wholesale bandwidth.

1:19:04

Right now, just to feed our network, we pay \$2000 a month for one connection and about \$1800 a month for another connection.

1:19:14

for a redundant internet connectivity through the organization.

1:19:18

And that feeds all of our tribal health facilities.

1:19:21

Our tribal operations across the board with that, with that 1-1 gig connection and we talked to just carrier, Hurricane Electric and we can get a wholesale flat rate 10 GHz link for 1200 a month.

1:19:41

I know one of our local exchanges has 2 10 GHz backhaul that they feed.

1:19:46

There are 3500 customers or subscribers with, and we are subject to their downtime or if we need more bandwidth, we have to go through them or if we need to extend our network out further, we have to use their existing facilities (their existing fiber facilities) to connect our towers.

1:20:06

So, when you talk about equitable distribution, I think middle mile, and I have heard this across the board now, is a huge component to that.

1:20:20

And, and I am not sure if that component, to get a fiber built, like, off the reservation down to the internet hotel, so that we can actually serve ourselves and serve our wireless 2-5 network, to get that underserved connectivity out there.

1:20:38

You are thinking about wanting to essentially bypass others in order to just go direct? Yes.

1:20:51

Without it we would have to negotiate these IRU's with the local exchanges to get those services. We have to have IRU's in place right now, just to connect our towers back to Pablo on their fiber, and we are subject to all of these constraints by them.

1:21:13

It is almost like they are intimidated that we are putting in this type of network.

1:21:17

We have worked with them for a long time they are kind of the only game in town.

1:21:21

But I think the further we have our independence with our network the more we can provide to, the community, the tribal membership, and the local community.

1:21:35

You know, especially when you start throwing around words, like little to no cost or free internet.

1:21:42

It really disrupts the appcart. Absolutely understood.

1:21:48

I just want to make sure that you know, these funding sources that are coming up that really address that middle mile and Internet backhaul. Because without it, it is hard to sustain the network, especially when you are getting quoted half a million dollars and we cannot do it out of pocket. The funding of some of those are \$2000 a month, for the next 20 years.

1:22:17

And you start adding every single leg of your dark fiber and your transport services in your backhaul. You are talking \$17,000 a month for something you are not getting any money for, and you are not bringing any money in to support that network.

1:22:33

So, Mr. Reese, I absolutely think one of the things I am hearing, I just wanted to clarify it with you, in this conversation, as you, as you have highlighted, the needs up in.

1:22:46

Salish and Kootenai country, kind of comes down to the duplication concerns that we are frankly wanting to hear some of these examples.

1:22:57

So, I just want to make sure I am understanding you correctly, because that is, it sounds to me, like, that is part of what your concern is, that you are having here, is that your ability to spend those dollars, and what you need to do to really provide affordable service to your community?

1:23:11

It sounds like you have some concerns around being able to spend those dollars, in order to do that. Did I hear that correctly?

1:23:18
It is and.

1:23:21
I know there's existing fiber in the ground, but you talked to the exchanges, like down in Missoula where they know south of us and then they meet up with the existing exchange here on the reservation. It is almost like a mafia between the two on how we get that connectivity through, even the state. And all of these facilities were funded by BTOP and ACAM and all these you can look historically and look at all of the reasons why they were going to put this in. And they the first ones they say, we are going to support the tribal community and underserved tribal areas, but at the end of the day when we have never really asked them for anything and then we start to try to negotiate you know.

1:24:10
Just even the transport for the backhaul from Missoula to here and it is astronomical, it is not even sustainable on our end.

1:24:20
So why not just put in our own services and just be independent of those costs? Also, it is a one and done then we do not have to worry about it.

1:24:30
Understood.

1:24:32
Well, do you have anything else, Mr. Reese, that you would like to add into your comments?

1:24:39
Now, I guess that is it for now, sorry I get riled up.

1:24:44
This is a tough conversation because the impact that you see in your community and that we were all seeing in Indian Country has really been exacerbated by Covid.

1:24:56
And you know, it is OK to be passionate. We appreciate the passion because we know that is coming from a good place.

1:25:02
So, thank you for your comments and your clarification on the duplication discussion, and, and how folks have used.

the demographic information to serve your tribe in the past, and it does not sound like that.

1:25:19
may be where things are.

1:25:22
So, thank you, on a side note.

1:25:25
Hopefully, at some point, we can make our way up to Salish. I have a strong affinity for Huckleberry ice cream.

1:25:32

Montana is a beautiful state, so thank you for your comments, Mr. Reese.

1:25:43

Adam, Councilman Garcia had wanted to add his comments. And then I have got a few folks who I think we are going to have to open the lines to meeting.

1:26:02

I am tracking in the questions and other places trying to keep up; apologies, it is taking me a few minutes to get back to you. Laura, do you happen to have the batting lineup? So, we will have Councilman Garcia, And then who do we have after Councilman Garcia? Just so they are aware.

1:26:22

So, that is what I was kind of trying to check my notes on. I have Norma Contreras who had a hand up, and now I do not see anymore, and then Paula [inaudible], and Henry, Cagey.

1:26:41

And then I have Samantha Skenandore and a couple of folks who have let me know that they are on the phone. So, we will, in order to get to them, have to open up all of the lines. So that is what I have got on my notes.

1:26:58

And like I said, if you did not hear your name, please send me a note in the questions. And if it takes me a minute, just know that I am, I am keeping track. It is just taking me to get to all of them.

1:27:14

Thank you.

1:27:15

All right, Councilman Garcia, do we have you on the line?

1:27:19

Yeah. Thank you. For the opportunity, and thank you all, the all-other representatives for, coming online.

1:27:26

I need to make three points.

1:27:27

One is just a preview, and I think that it has to do with not so much.

1:27:34

The consultation part of it, but just reality in Indian Country, and that is that.

1:27:42

If you are talking about any kind of, Build?

1:27:46

First, you had to have a good idea of where you are, in terms of what your infrastructure locally looks like...

1:27:54

are we starting at ground level, or is there a city nearby, or node, with high speed enough to help you along? Or are you starting from scratch completely?

1:28:09

And that puts you do at all lower-level preparedness if you will?

1:28:16

then, depending on where you are, the big factor in how the funding can really provide for the needs of the community and your citizenship, [inaudible]

1:28:30

I think that it needs to be part of the concept.

1:28:35

Oh, well, what is happening with all this program?

1:28:40

Well, that is a preview the.

1:28:43

Second, thing is a point I would like to make, and it speaks to the situation in Montana, example is that the one that we just heard about?

1:28:55

Yes sir.

1:28:56

What we have in Northern New Mexico is a project that started up in the era funding cycle back in 2010.

1:29:07

And there was a partnership between four tribes.

1:29:13

And three other entities Rio River County in New Mexico and the other ones were a couple of the cities, Santa Fe County and Rio River County and then the City of Espanola which are non-tribal communities.

1:29:30

So, what we have is the middle mile part already done. That project went over well. We have completed and providing services currently.

1:29:43

However, if you think about a government-to-government, we are talking about a local government.

1:29:52

The tribe the four tribes that are, members, and then the City, Government, and then the County Government which are part of the state, this happened in a consortium.

1:30:05

And it is called Redi-Net or Regional Economic Development.

1:30:10

But the project is up and running, and I will tell you the problems we have are not so much the middle mile it is the last mile.

1:30:21

The last mile is when you get to the communities and it has been hard for us, we got several [inaudible] here in my Pueblo Ohkay Owingeh

1:30:34

But getting that last mile, provider, into our community has been the goal, you might call it a chokehold, because.

1:30:45

Somebody already mentioned that there's not enough money to be made by these last mile providers, at least that is an excuse.

1:30:55

And so, other entities, last mile providers are not willing to bite.

1:31:01

the bullet to provide the services of this middle mile as the last mile provider, but

1:31:07

I think in this, in this consultation, you did talk about consortiums, but it did not say anything about tribal and non-tribal consortium.

1:31:20

I wanted to be sure that we are able to include them, because in this case, that is a model that could be used throughout Indian Country, and I just see another model right up in Montana already.

1:31:33

And if they use the same concept.

1:31:37

I think there will be a great deal. And everybody benefits now especially with Covid situations. If we did not have this Redi-Net provision for northern new Mexico I do not know where we would be because those last mile providers would never have

1:31:48

come in at all. So, that is a potential solution, but it could be a potential solution.

1:32:02

All throughout Indian Country, in the United States of America, that is my second point.

1:32:09

And the third one is, When you are talking about requirements or conditions upon which the funding may be made available, it has to do with the 2.5 gigahertz licenses.

1:32:24

that in itself, should not be used as a prerequisite in order to promote the funds that are available, because that, that happened just a year ago.

1:32:37

And so, the tribes, some have got licensed on that, some have not even applied, even though they may have been eligible. But then, there are some that could not apply because the spectrum was not available in their area so no fault of their own.

1:32:53

But that is the final point, that I wanted to make sure that is not a prerequisite, that they want to use that, and the tribes have it more power to them it is a technology that is available. And they can use it in that way.

1:33:09

But they should not be required to have it in order to see something from this program so all of that. I will give more time to other people. But thank you for the opportunity. I will probably be on the next two calls as well.

1:33:26

Thank you, Council member. Thank you.

1:33:28

Good to hear your voice and thank you for sharing that feedback.

1:33:33

And, absolutely here just heard what you said, regarding not making the 2.5 a litmus test or, or a prerequisite for eligibility for the funds.

1:33:47

So, along with all the other, the other very well-articulated comments that you made. Thank you.

1:33:54

All right, Laura. Who do we have next?

1:33:56

Alright, I am going to try, Paula, again, Give me one second, and.

1:34:09

Let us see.

1:34:13

Paula [inaudible]?

1:34:13

Can you hear me?

1:34:22

I can hear you. I do not have a question. I am very sorry.

1:34:27

No worries at all.

1:34:30

All right.

1:34:33

Next, Samantha has indicated to me that representative Hinu hope I am saying that correctly.

1:34:44

Samantha has a comment and she, I believe, is, on the phone line, So Gilbert, I am going to have to ask you, I think in order for us to hear her you are going to actually have to unmute all of the lines, if you could do that for us.

1:35:04

And then when we do that, OK, so when, when we unmute the lines, you may need to re-mute your phone.

1:35:14

So, as we open up the lines, in order for each individual to speak, can you, please, if you are not speaking, mute your device? Thank you.

1:35:32

Everyone now has, I was just going to say everyone audio control Amanda would not need to hit star six to begin speaking.

1:35:39

on her device.

1:35:43

Okay, I think it is representative Hinu Smith is the person who is on audio, No worries.

1:35:51

so, I guess, like Adam and Gilbert indicated, if you could mute your individual line so that we can hear Representative Smith, that would be wonderful. And then we will re mute the lines and go back to the next folks in line.

1:36:08

I have Sally Fineday and Peter McCaslin.

1:36:14

All right, good afternoon.

1:36:17

Hello, this is Hinu Smith. Can you hear me? I think I am unmuted.

1:36:22

We can, I feel like can you hear me now is the is the new term for the last year and a half. Yes, we can hear you and thank you for joining us

1:36:32

Thank you for accommodating. I know this is, you know, kind of a really wonky way to have a meeting and consultation, but, you know, technology. I hate it, love it. It is amazing, this was fantastic. Thank you.

1:36:46

Hinu Smith, Legislative representative of the Ho-Chunk Nation, and just by virtue of my position, I do have authority to speak for the Nation. So

1:36:57

In preparation for this meeting, I just, I had some comments that I will just read from.

1:37:03

So, I apologize for not just kind of adhering to your areas for today.

1:37:10

But we will be drafting further comments, and then hitting on those areas. I will try to break it down that way for your convenience.

1:37:17

So just bear with me while I read this.

1:37:20

I would appreciate it.

1:37:22

Ho-Chunk Nation is the Reservationless tribe.

1:37:24

Throughout Indian Country, this is often referred to as being landless.

1:37:30

But we are not exactly landless, we do not.

1:37:33

Or we do own scattered parcels over 11,000 acres, located predominantly through 22 acres in Wisconsin, or 22 counties in Wisconsin. We also have parcels in Minnesota.

1:37:44

And in Illinois, we have an additional 3500 acres of individually owned allotment, homestead acres.

1:37:51

Each of the landholdings represents a historical village site [inaudible] Ho-Chunk Nation.

1:37:59

Ho-Chunk once held a title to 10 million 10.5 million acres before the treaties were signed.

1:38:06

These scattered lands are homes to many of our tribal members, nearly.

1:38:12

we have nearly 8000 tribal members and our Government Services Satellite Offices and Economic Development Enterprises.

1:38:21

And, of course, our cultural sacred sites, as well. As more Ho-Chunk Nation is a unique situation because we must develop these critical networks in the scattered communities.

1:38:31

We submitted eight applications for the FCC, under the world tribal window of opportunity for spectrum license over our land, which by the way, is also designated rural land constituting, underserved and unserved areas.

1:38:46

These applications are still pending a task ahead of us demands.

1:38:51

We are in a unique situation to have a partner with several local governments including the state and various rural private.

1:38:57

Service providers to build multiple networks that our communities need, financial support, is critical for the planning and implementation of the technical connectivity solutions we will need

support from the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. And the program must meet the unique needs of tribes situated like the Ho-Chunk Nation.

1:39:16

The program funding must be equitable and non-discriminatory to tribes without a reservation because we will need support for both infrastructure deployment and broadband programming. We cannot be limited to development connectivity for only one community, because to do so would not only be discriminatory to other communities.

1:39:36

But would deny our tribal communities, the critical connectivity they need for telehealth, distance learning, education, employment, and law enforcement, and emergency services, including additional items, as well. The program must be built to allow us to address the unique needs and challenges of each of our scattered seven communities, including, Black River Falls, Wisconsin Dells, Tomah, Wittenberg, Madison, Deloitte, and more.

1:40:03

collectively, we look forward to working with NTIA and others to help shape the program so that it truly mitigates the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic to tribes, including those situated like the Ho-Chunk Nation. Thank you.

1:40:23

And I also, before I mute myself, I hope that the slides, from the WebEx will also be made available to everybody that registered too. Some of us are calling in on the phone because we do not have good connection. Thank you.

1:40:38

Thank you, Representative Smith from the Ho-Chunk Nation for your, for your feedback, and, and you are in, and the awareness that we need to take, when it comes into considerations regarding your tribe.

1:40:51

In response To your question about the slides, if you go to the Broadband USA website, you will actually find the links, too.

1:41:04

All the content associated with this particular, with the tribal Broadband Connectivity Grant Program, including this slide deck.

1:41:12

And we also welcome you to come back, or submit your responses in writing, as well.

1:41:17

And thank you for your thoughtful words, and your representation on behalf of your nation. Thank you.

1:41:24

Who do we have next Laura, alright I think Peter, McCaslin?

1:41:38

Peter, can you let me know if you can hear me? Tell me if we are going to be able to hear you. Yeah, that is wonderful, Thank you.

1:41:46

All right, we figured it out.

1:41:48

Good morning from Alaska, everyone. I am Peter McCaslin. I am the IT director for Kenaitze Indian Tribe in south-central Alaska.

1:41:58

I serve on the FCC, native nations, Tribal Broadband Task Force, with Joe and Will and probably a number of others on this call.

1:42:09

I have got to tell you that I do support one metaphor statement on the financial issues that we face up here in Alaska. Things are a little bit different

1:42:18

We are not a tribal reservation type program.

1:42:25

We do have lands here that[inaudible].

1:42:30

We have applied for the 2.5 gigahertz spectrum I do have concerns with the speed of the approval process the 2.5 gigahertz filing.

1:42:43

And if we will even be able to utilize the \$7 billion just recently released in Covid funding from December of last year.

1:42:53

They put a few dates that we have to use it.

1:42:58

We were one of the first tribes to actually file, and it appears they are, working at it backwards, as it looks to me. So, I do have concerns whether the funding is even going to be available by the time we are approved.

1:43:13

Our status in Alaska and south central where I live is the current infrastructure extends down the main arteries road system in Alaska.

1:43:22

A lot of our tribal members live out beyond 3 to 4 miles from that artery and do not get any type of service.

1:43:32

As an example, I will tell you that, we had to transition to utilization of the zoom for health care.

1:43:44

A lot of our tribal members did not even have the bandwidth to be able to utilize a video session. And, at the last moment, we had to stop, drop, and roll on install additional PRI lines, show that we could do phone visits with these people, the amount of phone calls, that our system had used was exceeding our capacity. And we had to increase capacity on the phone lines, just to be able to do at home visits with our patients.

1:44:14

A lot of our current infrastructure extends out to places like, oh, it will make it as far as the refinery down the road, but it does not go the last mile into to the residential neighborhoods.

1:44:25

So, making it that last mile is going to be very critical, as far as responding.

1:44:33

So, I think, for the most part, that is the extent of my comments.

1:44:41

The area I live in is like the size of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, altogether, and we are just a small segment of the state.

1:44:52

Thank you for

1:44:53

Putting this program together, I appreciate it.

1:44:58

Thank you, Mr. McCaslin, ..., thank you so much for your feedback.

1:45:03

And we absolutely understand that Alaska is, has a lot of unique challenges purely based on where it is located on the globe and with the typography.

1:45:17

And so, we appreciate your feedback, and the comments you made regarding the health services.

1:45:24

It is some of, those bandwidth issues that you are having.

1:45:26

And how you see this is, my understanding is how you see this as a, as a solution to solve, especially those last mile issues that you are having.

1:45:35

So, thank you for providing that feedback and again, if you have more comments into the future or you want to come back for the next sessions, I would also encourage you to do that as well as submitting any additional feedback through our...

1:45:52

e-mail, e-mail accounts. Thank you.

1:45:58

Very good. All right, so, next up. Alright, Next step I have Shelly Fineday.

1:46:12

Ms. Fineday, I have unmuted your line.

1:46:19

This is Sally Fineday, I am a member of Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe.

1:46:22

And I worked for the organization as a grant writer.

1:46:26

and I have been in the industry for about 10 years now.

1:46:30

one of the problems that we have currently, is that we have people who are living in areas that do not have Internet access.

1:46:40

And I do not think that is because of the fact that there is not access available there, It is just that they cannot afford it.

1:46:47

And during this comment, I just talked to a person yesterday who said that their daughter, has a card that is given to her child from school.

1:46:58

And the issue with that card is that it is used via cell phone, Then the child is doing homework via a cell phone.

1:47:08

And it is unreasonable, I think.

1:47:12

But I think also that we have 15 communities in our 60 by 60-mile area, that's well, well wooded forested, lakes.

1:47:24

It is, really unreasonable for people who are living in outlying communities who are a lot of them do not have regular jobs, they are living off of the land

1:47:36

those people are the ones who are being under being missed in this opportunity.

1:47:41

As far as equitable distribution, I have to agree that, you know, we should consider our population when we are going to be distributing, and definitely, our unique needs.

1:47:57

Differ from tribe to tribe.

1:47:59

I would also like to affirm to that the broadband map is definitely not accurate as far as our tribal lands.

1:48:09

I just looked at a couple days ago and it says that we only have a small portion on the western side of our reservation that is unserved or need service and that is not accurate.

1:48:22

We have, I would also like to say that our tribe should certify who is unserved in our area and mostly, I think, it is, the fact for our people.

1:48:32

We have 40% of our population, are living below poverty level.

1:48:38

For them to have Internet access on a fiber that is coming to their home, they are not going to be able to afford it.

1:48:48

We have, we are recently working on attempting to get fiber to all of our 15 community centers.

1:48:56

And the problem that we run into with grant opportunities like, USDA is that they are using the maps. And they are seeing that there's already areas, those areas are already served.

1:49:11

And they may be already served.

1:49:12

But I think that what we are experiencing too is sustainability.

1:49:18

Yes. We could go ahead and use the fiber that is there and use the service that is being provided. But we are so widespread in our 60 by 60-mile area that it is not cost effective for us.

1:49:31

It is best, had our own fiber from our, from our headquarters to our 15 areas.

1:49:37

Then we could administer that in maybe in, especially because it is so far out, and so many people do not have the money to pay for internet, we would probably then, you know, get it out to the community center and then send it through the air using our recently acquired 2.5 GHz spectrum.

1:49:59

Thank you.

1:50:02

Sally, can I ask you a quick question? Thank you for your comments first. So, you lead the conversation with affordability, with an affordability discussion

1:50:14

So, what would you envision?

1:50:17

Do you see an application process for your tribe? Would your needs be something that would address both, like the immediate affordability challenges that you have?

1:50:27

Because as you said, there are those that have a level of access, but it is an affordability challenge, as well as an application that may address the infrastructure. The thoughts as you had mentioned, where to have a central point where you are feeding in your fiber, and then using 2.5 GHz to wirelessly get that through to your communities.

1:50:47

I am just trying to understand how you would see if you were able to write your own application or structure your application.

1:50:57

How would you how would you structure this process?

1:51:01

I think you know with our need to serve ourselves one of the things that the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe has done since 1999 because we have, we live in such a broad area and at the time in 1999 there was 5 or 6 companies that were serving our tribal lands.

1:51:17

And for us to pay all those bills to have somebody come out and change the telephone line from here to there was really costly.

1:51:25

So, from 1999 on the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Tribal Government, utilized spectrum.

1:51:32

And sent a signal out to our community centers at that point, So, we are not unfamiliar with sending a signal through via wireless, because of the fact that we are a heavily wooded area.

1:51:48

I am understanding that the new spectrum that we have acquired is going to be better serve that mode however, I am working on now is how do we get beyond those maps because so many of our areas are marked served, and it is not true. Even if they are marked served people that are living, there, cannot afford it.

1:52:13

So, that is why I am recommending that we serve our own.

1:52:19

We have been doing this for quite a while and a lot of times people here... [inaudible].

1:52:28

I understand satellite is coming up I personally once moved to Leech Lake in 2007 we had satellite and it was very expensive and it was challenging because of the weather and even if people were to get satellite today, I understand that it is going to be about \$100 a month.

1:52:58

We might have lost you Sally.

1:53:03

Sally, can you hear me?

1:53:04

There we go.

1:53:06

Yes. Sally, take two steps to the right, Sally.

1:53:13

I am actually one of those. I was in an underserved area. I am working for my home.

1:53:22

Today, and I my Internet comes in on a T line copper line into my house. It is on a booster.

1:53:29

That is fairly reasonable for me. I think \$50 a month is reasonable. I do not do anything like that. But, you know, when two people are using the Internet, my daughter is currently going to tribal college.

1:53:39

It is challenging at times, you know, as far as streaming.

1:53:43

We live in rural Minnesota. And it is very rural here. There is.

1:53:53

The lack of availability for affordable Internet service is a major issue with 40% of our population.

1:54:01

Thank you.

1:54:02

Thank you, Sally for clarifying that a little bit more for us.

1:54:07

And, in terms of where you are coming from with, with all your comments.

1:54:12

And, again, I appreciate your candor, Migwetch (thank you).

1:54:20

I will just add that Mr. Chuck Reese also said well said. Sally. Just thought I would pass that along from the chat box. Let us see.

1:54:32

I tried to check with folks who I saw hands up earlier but did not now. And the only one I have up now.

1:54:45

Was Henry Cagey and I just lost that one. There you are.

1:54:53

I will be unmuting you.

1:54:56

And, Mr. Cagey, if you could state who you are representing, your line is open.

1:55:13

Mr. Cagey?

1:56:01

Yes, I can hear you, but I cannot hear Henry.

1:56:09

Henry will give it about maybe 10 more seconds, Mr. Cagey.

1:56:20

It seems like he is trying, but not coming through.

1:56:23

Gotcha.

1:56:28

Let us try one more time, and what we can do is.

1:56:37

See if the trouble is that he is on the phone, or something, Gilbert. Can I ask you again, to?

1:56:48

Unmute all, and let see, if.

1:56:51

That opens up the line for him.

1:56:56

Unmuted him or all.

1:57:08

Right.

1:57:13

OK, I do see that Aaron Payment, Mr. Payment, has his hand up again, and I believe?

1:57:23

You are live,

1:57:26

Yes.

1:57:27

OK, so I will fill in while we are waiting to see if we can connect him.

1:57:41

So, one of the comments I wanted to provide on the reporting requirements.

1:57:47

Criteria input that is another area that we were asked during the CARES Act consultation.

1:57:55

And, I believe, that Indian Country gave a really good explanation of what we already are accustomed to, what we already do.

1:58:08

In terms of the various funding sources, my tribe has nine different budget cycles, and we perform no less than six individual audits, and so tribes are very conventional and up to date with knowing how to report information.

1:58:30

So, what I would suggest is that tribes have to follow government accounting practices.

1:58:37

And all of the reporting requirements should be based on our application. So, if we say we are going to do a particular thing, by a particular time, the reporting should match that.

1:58:52

And beyond that, I do not think there is a need for any additional requirements to be imposed on tribes.

1:59:00

I can tell you during the discussion during the CARES Act consultation it.

1:59:06

It demonstrated that Treasury just had no clue of how to communicate with tribes, tribes of sovereigns.

1:59:13

Tribes is highly regulated, and comprehensive systems for reporting are our financial expenditure.

1:59:23

So, I do not think a lot of time should be spent on that.

1:59:26

I think that the requirements for reporting should match what is proposed in the respective applications that tribes submit.

1:59:36

But I also wanted to suggest, yeah, given that it is not already in the legislation, I am not sure how this happens unless there is a comparable funding source, or non-tribal, local governments and regions.

1:59:53

And so, during infrastructure testimony, on behalf of NCAI, I testified that, in order to make these resources go further, it would make sense if the match dollars outside of the tribes, eligibility would have some language in it, that would encourage them to collaborate with tribal applicants.

2:00:20

And the reason for that is because we are, you know, the money is huge. It is a billion dollars, but the need in Indian Country far exceeds the amount that is being made available.

2:00:30

And with broadband and connectivity, you know, this is like a major infrastructural deficit that we have as a country.

2:00:39

And so, the billion dollars is not going to close that gap.

2:00:42

The money that is made available to state and local governments is not going to fill that gap.

2:00:48

And so, wherever possible, encouraging public private partnerships, I think would be helpful.

2:00:54

But now, having said that, I do not think that should be a stipulation on the tribal side.

2:01:00

I think it should be on the outside of the tribal side, so that they know enough to reach out to us to collaborate.

2:01:10

And, of course, we think very innovatively that way.

2:01:12

And if, if the local government add that requirement, we will reach out to them and say, Oh, by the way, you can meet your additional point threshold by collaborating with us. And here, we have some money to apply, as well.

2:01:27

And so, that is on the public side, but also, on the private side, any kind of incentive.

2:01:32

That is exist for private companies to reach out to tribes, would be appreciated, as well.

2:01:47

You are speaking along the lines of making sure this comes back to I think it is as if we had an equitable distribution segment but making sure that people are not writing applications on your behalf.

2:02:01

or saying they are going to serve you without your knowledge,

2:02:04

or not your knowledge, but without your approval.

2:02:10

Right. It should come with an unarticulated agreement on how we will collaborate, and when that happens, then the outside agencies are required to come back to us.

2:02:21

The thing is, I use as an example, and this is a little off topic for broadband. But, in my community, we have a checkerboard. So, we have our original reservation with it, which is within town.

2:02:35

And then, we have a satellite operation, about two and a half miles out of town.

2:02:40

It is outside of the city limits, and so, in order for us to have water and sewer up there, other than dig wells, we tap into the city infrastructure, and we collaborated in our application, We have a 1 to 1. So, we are not charge normally outside the city limits, that is 1.5. So, it is 1 to 1. But it benefits the city because we pay down their infrastructure costs because we just added 300 more users.

2:03:07

And so, we got some money under [inaudible] for that and that was not designed that way.

2:03:13

But we structured it that way because we knew we could not build a whole new infrastructure.

2:03:19

And so, that is an example of the government partnerships that will help this infrastructure need go a lot further. So, I think the same is true for broadband, like I said earlier than the equitable distribution, You know, and I use the 50, 30 20 split.

2:03:37

We have a checkerboard reservation.

2:03:41

We have Satellite Health Center in Escanaba, Michigan, which is a three-hour drive from here.

2:03:47

So, our needs are great, they are just as great there as they are here, probably greater, because they are more rural, they are here, and so on.

2:03:55

So, connecting between 160 miles across a very rural community and facilitating connections with local governments across the upper peninsula, I think the incentive to get them to work with us.

2:04:18

And it is a win-win win.

2:04:22

All right. Thank you. Thank you. All right. Back to you.

2:04:30

And, just as a reminder, we do have the phone line that we still have open, Laura.

2:04:46

We got a little bit more background noise.

2:04:48

I would just ask if folks can mute their own lines so that folks who are otherwise unable to participate.

2:05:02

Alright, I am going to try, I have got.

2:05:08

I see, that is a different e-mail address for Mr. Henry Cagey.

2:05:25

Yeah, All right, I am going to try to mute the lines, because it sounds like we have got some background noise, and then.

2:05:47

Hello! Mr. Cagey.

2:05:54

Yes, it is. I am on my phone now. I could not figure that thing out okay; you should have seen the prep session.

2:06:06

My apologies for any of the, of the technical elements here, but thank you for being patient with us.

2:06:11

The floor is yours, if you would not mind, just say your full name, title and who you are representing.

2:06:17

Thank you.

2:06:17

Yeah, it is Henry Cagey with the Lummi Nation, and I am a council member, for a longtime, about over 30 years now. So, I am not a techie.

2:06:29

I really do not understand all the stuff that goes with that, the terms with broadband, but, you know, for Lummi, is that we have a grant that we submitted.

2:06:43

We got the planning done.

2:06:47

But it is engineering that we need to build on, and I do not know if the 2% is going to cover that, or not, we do not know.

2:06:58

But, with Lummi, we have some folks you heard is that we have a checkerboard reservation with tribal and non-tribal people.

2:07:07

We have a provider on the reservation who is doing the best he can, but the service that he has, isn't that good, know?

2:07:18

So, what happens is, our kids get online and school and they either get bumped off or there's not enough room for them to do that because you can only have one computer then than yet 2 or 3 other kids in the room, it is not working.

2:07:34

So, we have service, but we want our own service.

2:07:40

So, one of the things that Lummi wants to do is we want we see this as an opportunity to put our own system in.

2:07:47

We want to have it in a way that provides services to our people the way that we want to.

2:07:56

And right now, we do not want to be punished by you folks, because we have service from another provider.

2:08:05

We want to do it ourselves. We hope you are going to respect our request to build out our system, the way Lummi wants to do it.

2:08:14

So, we want to move it that way.

2:08:17

We do want to know, can we buy this guy out here, because he has a few fiber lines out here, but can we buy existing lines that are out here?

2:08:28

We do not know that either.

2:08:29

That is a question that we have is, can we buy some by this line that he has and upgrade it, because, you know, for years, it has been the non-Indians out here get the best service, and the Indians get the worst.

2:08:44

And so, they seem to have it organized, where the non-Indians have the best service, they got what they have intown, and we get what's kind of leftover.

2:08:54

So, it is good, but it is I do not know what you call it underserved or under something.

2:09:02

But that is one issue.

2:09:05

Let me ask you a question.

2:09:06

Councilman Cagey, do you feel like it is inadequate, or is it not meeting the need today? It is not meeting the need and again, we want to, exercise our own authority to do it ourselves.

2:09:22

So, we take control at what we give our people, and we want it to be affordable.

2:09:28

A lot of our people, or families, are poor and, they cannot afford the \$80, \$90 a month that people have to pay.

2:09:38

We want a service to be affordable for our people and not giving it to some company that really does not care about the Indians and do it ourselves.

2:09:49

Understood.

2:09:51

So, when you get to tribal lands, I am going to go right down the ATNI folks, We kind of put some talking points together, so I am going to lay those out Adam.

2:10:00

Please.

2:10:01

Number one, Tribal resolutions; tribal resolution should be required for all applications purporting to serve tribal lands.

2:10:11

So, if you are going to do with tribal lands, you should look at the governing body that oversees the tribal lands. Usually, we would like to see it by resolution.

2:10:22

Equitable, the evolution should be based on need, as the law says equitable, so we want to make sure that it is going to be equitable.

2:10:30

As you heard earlier each tribe is at a different level.

2:10:35

Really, you want to base it on just where the tribe is at and what their needs are.

2:10:43

Then the third one is definition of duplication of federal funding should not...or should be very narrow.

2:10:50

I am not sure what that means but I think if there's duplication of funds that you want to interpret it very narrow.

2:10:58

Number four is the 2.5 GHz licensing should not be used as a prior condition or to be given some sort of priority weight in applications.

2:11:12

So, there is this GHz licensing, as I understand it. We do not own it.

2:11:17

We applied for this license a while back and we got denied because those folks out of Arizona own our airspace and they will not give it up.

2:11:29

And they have had it for years, I guess, and uh, where we have been denied a few times now by the FCC folks to take back our airspace.

2:11:40

It does not sound like there is any way around it.

2:11:43

So, I am not sure what the solution is on the on the licensing.

2:11:48

But for Lummi for example it affects us.

2:11:52

And this licensing also affects those tribes in our area in the Portland area.

2:11:58

Olympia, Seattle, Yakima, and Spokane.

2:12:02

We would like to make sure that you guys get your minds around the licensing part of it what we need, so that those tribes can keep moving forward.

2:12:14

On the other one on the prehistoric Act, on the Environmental, I think one of the things you also want to add to your lists are these right of ways, so these rights-of-way are a problem and a lot of them are expired.

2:12:31

Either you know about your right-of-way, or you do not.

2:12:37

In our area, you know on Lummi, for example, these rights-of-way expired 25 years ago.

2:12:43

But yet, they are still being used by the companies.

2:12:48

Then the underserved areas, like I said, we want to make sure that that the folks that you guys are working with, their Adam understand that Indian Country is very unique.

2:13:01

And it has got to be understood. I think you are going to need more help than just one guy.

2:13:07

You know, we have a lot of subject matter experts around Indian Country.

2:13:13

And you really should be tapping into some of these folks.

2:13:16

That can help you, because I would not put it all in one man's shoulder to help figure this out.

2:13:24

You may think of an advisory committee or something like that, that can help this organization do a good job.

2:13:33

So, this funding is another question that I have that is not on the list, but if we make a mistake in our application, can we correct it?

2:13:45

Is there going to be room to go back and redo our application if we make a mistake or if we need some additional support?

2:13:57

The other concern I have is, is this the supply chain?

2:14:02

And we expect this thing to get built out in a year, so I understand it.

2:14:07

But what if we do not have the supplies?

2:14:11

And what are we expected to do, does the money go away, or do we wait for the supplies?

2:14:17

They may take a year or two to, to get the, the equipment, or the, or the fiber.

2:14:24

And I do not know if you guys looked at the supply chain, but we ordered some things for our people, and it took least 4 or 5 months sometimes to get things ordered.

2:14:35

So, that is just some of our concerns.

2:14:40

The other one, the last one, I think, is the service providers that are on here now once we get to flip the switch or begin to flip the switch.

2:14:50

We want to make sure that these providers that are on the reservation do not punish us.

2:14:58

So, they do not come back and turn us off, maybe two months before we are getting ready to flip our switch, because some of these providers are not very friendly to Indian people.

2:15:18

Thank you.

2:15:21

Yep.

2:15:22

Councilman, Cagey, I do have a question for you on the....

2:15:27

Oh, are you there?

2:15:30

I am. I thought you were done. I am sorry. It may have cut out

2:15:34

Go ahead.

2:15:36

I would recommend that if you want our consultation that we have a lot of questions.

2:15:43

And I hope you are going to be able to answer some of them as you go forward.

2:15:46

Because, again, is there going to be room to answer the questions that we have and respond to what the consultation needs to be? Is that you know we have questions.

2:15:55

We want you to answer them. So that we can hear whether it is going to be doable or not.

2:16:00

I hope that is in the last part of your consultation, where the answers come on our questions.

2:16:08

Thank you, I appreciate that.

2:16:11

That feedback, I think a large portion of the way that the statute reads, there is a lot of flexibility in terms of some of these spaces.

2:16:22

So, one of the things that I would ask of all of you providing comment, or that you may have questions as you submit your questions to us.

2:16:32

If you could also submit what you feel the solution is, to that question.

2:16:39

Because it is a fairly blank slate with some of these, with a lot of the elements within the statute, which is unusual coming in coming to Indian Country. We are not used to again having an opportunity to select ingredients for the cake before it is baked.

2:16:55

And in this instance, we do have that opportunity, so I do not have a direct answer for you on your question about questions. Beyond that, I think we need that to.

2:17:08

Receive this feedback from today and do a little bit of a regroup with our team, and then discuss how we want to take those responses beyond what we have heard in today's consultation. In full disclosure, that is where we are at the moment.

2:17:25

Oh, one more Adam.

2:17:28

Yes, there is a bigger problem with the ocean tribes that have a cable that goes past their reservation.

2:17:42

Mr. Cagey, I think we lost you.

2:17:51

There you go.

2:17:52

There we go. If you could repeat the last statement that you made.

2:17:56

Yeah, the ocean tribes have cable that goes past

2:18:02

Their territories.

2:18:04

And they want access to those lines that are sitting outside their.

2:18:09

boundaries in the water.

2:18:15

Understood.

2:18:17

I believe that there is a, element in the statute that does address Oceanic cable economic barrier as well.

2:18:27

So, thank you for that feedback. Thank you.

2:18:31

And anything additional, uh, Councilman Cagey, that is it for now.

2:18:36

But thank you guys very much, and we will look forward to getting something together for you guys.

2:18:43

Wonderful, thank you.

2:18:44

Thank you for your insightful feedback and I am sharing your perspective on behalf of Lummi. Thank you.

2:18:53

Laura? Yeah. So, we do have a couple of folks with hands up.

2:19:00

And I just want to remind folks that if you are a tribal leader and you have comments to share as a part of this consultation that you use the Raise Hand function in the go-to Webinar Tool and the app, and then we will try again to unmute all of the lines.

2:19:27

So that people who are on audio only can participate, as well. I have two more lined up. With, with hands up. Theron Rutyna.

2:19:39

And Madonna Yawakie.

2:19:42

So, I will take those in the order that I mentioned and then look for other hands or after this, be sure that we open the line.

2:19:54

Thank you.

2:19:55

All right.

2:19:56

Mr. Rutyna, How are you?

2:20:04

We cannot hear, I have unmuted your line. Are you able to?

2:20:11

I think I have it now.

2:20:13

There we go, How are you doing?

2:20:14

Yes, very good Adam this is Theron Rutyna from the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, I also serve on the FirstNet tribal working group and in the FCC Native Nations Task Force.

2:20:26

As well as, working with Governor Tony Evers, Broadband Task Force for the State of Wisconsin. I really would like to echo the words of the other native leaders I have been listening to for the past couple of hours.

2:20:37

They have got some great ideas, and we are really seeing what this funding can and cannot do.

2:20:42

From my position, in Northern Wisconsin, I would like to bring up the idea of whether this funding could be used to subsidize cellular equipment for various carriers in order to bring cellular broadband to membership in areas where towers are the only way we are going to ever be able to feed these members reasonable bandwidth.

2:21:01

To give you an example, outside of the AT&T and FirstNet contract, no other providers are wanting to come up to this part of Northern Wisconsin, because it does not make a business case for them, to be able to put the equipment on the tower. They would be perfectly happy to operate that equipment.

2:21:17

But without the funding to make that equipment exist in the first place, then there is no way to get cellular providers onto our new towers, and sometimes even onto existing towers.

2:21:27

The tribe is going to be building another tower to cover the shaded areas of our reservation as well as the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, whereas the original AT&T FirstNet Tower does not cover.

2:21:38

Well, I am relatively confident in the abilities of AT&T and FirstNet.

2:21:43

Many of the membership have been asking, why can't other carriers come up? And those carriers have simply said no business case.

2:21:51

So, in a year buildout there is not much that as a small reservation with little human resources, we are not going to be able to build anything out.

2:22:01

But that we could definitely make happen.

2:22:03

So, that is my commentary, and I appreciate the opportunity for consultation.

2:22:08

Mr. Rutyna, It sounds as though, you listed two items that you, that you see as priority areas for you or buckets.

2:22:16

And as we are talking through this, we are thinking about what are the different buckets or categories that that folks may be thinking about?

2:22:23

So, what I heard from you is, you have one bucket need that may be the actual acquisition of a piece of equipment.

2:22:30

But then you also, they also have an infrastructure or fiber pole, or more infrastructure centric component of your needs as well. Is that correct? That is correct. Those infrastructure needs are there.

2:22:42

I just cannot visualize being able to do them in the timeframes that have been listed. The first, I can with the purchasing of equipment.

2:22:50

But the infrastructure needs, especially with the supply chain, the supply chain of contractors, and just the sheer amount of time it takes to contract and go through the permitting processes.

2:23:01

It took me 2.5 years to get a single three-mile line into Bayfield, which is, our nearest large city.

2:23:08

I cannot imagine being able to do a tribal infrastructure project in sub one-year.

2:23:15

Thank you.

2:23:16

You bring up a great point that we have heard that we have heard and thank you for providing that on the record today about your concerns, the one-year timeline associated currently matches. Thank you for. Your welcome, Adam, thank you for your time. Thank you.

2:23:37

All right, Laura. Who do we have next?

2:23:41

So, we had a hand up that I did not get to write the name down, and I will confess it is not there anymore. So, I do not know who that was.

2:23:53

Jerry Noonan.

2:23:57

I am going to unmute your line.

2:24:02

Mr. Noonan, your, lines should be live.

2:24:15

OK, here we go.

2:24:18

Can you use my computer right now? I think unmuted, now, correct?

2:24:23

You are in now Mr. Noonan. Thank you.

2:24:25

All right, good. I represent the Santee Sioux Nation out in Nebraska.

2:24:32

And I am actually a contracted CFO and a CPA, and I have, kind of, a unique perspective.

2:24:37

I was, in the telecommunication business, back in 1996 when they deregulated the telecommunications industry.

2:24:47

And, at that time, I think, this may be a solution for the tribes.

2:24:52

They had what they called an ILEC and the CLEC, an ILEC were the

2:24:56

Were the Local Exchange Carriers, which were in existence at the time.

2:25:01

Then, they also created a classification called a CLEC

2:25:06

CLEC was a Competitive Local Exchange Carrier and one of the unique things that they were able to do, and we were able to do.

2:25:15

They had an element called an unbundled network element which allowed you to go in and negotiate separately with the ILEC

2:25:23

for certain infrastructure services and anything that they had available, but you are able to negotiate that, you also were able to get at some of the subsidized programs, such as the Universal Service Fund.

2:25:37

So, I hear the word checkerboard, I think of instantly.

2:25:41

Every tribe should form some type of a communication enterprise.

2:25:48

Under the 1934 re-organization Act.

2:25:52

If they are a corporation, create themselves, a communication company, or a telco, then apply either to the State or to the FCC to become a CLEC^{2:26:03}

And then they can go in and negotiate some of these elements with the Local Exchange Carrier to get the services that they are looking for.

2:26:12

And I offer that only as, uh, as a comment.

2:26:15

Because we just bought a small internet service carrier in the city itself, and we had.

2:26:22

About 100 customers we are presently going to file for a CLEC status with the state of Nebraska so that we can start doing some of this infrastructure start negotiating with some of these ILEC's for the Unbundle Network elements such as Fiber.

2:26:39

Just a comment.

2:26:44

Thank you.

2:26:48

Do you have, any additional comments, Mr. Noonan, that is it. Thank you for the for the feedback and suggestions around some creative solutions. My only question was is FCC?

2:27:04

If you did get a CLEC, are they going to be in line to basically put out a CLEC approval without go into a state?

2:27:20

I do not know the answer to that, but we will capture that.

.2:27:33

I am continuing to check the question, or the chat box. To address any comments or difficulties folks are having I do not have anyone with a hand up in go to Webinar.

2:27:49

At this point, I am going to ask, Gilbert can you unmute the line, and I know it might get a little loud, but want to be sure that we have offered everyone who is participating, the opportunity to provide their comment. So, Gilbert, can you let us know when you have the lines unmuted?

2:28:15

Yeah.

2:28:15

I just unmuted the line and folks who are on audio only, will have to press star six, to unmute themselves, I just sort of unlocked that permission if you have a comment for us.

2:28:29

Thank you, Gilbert. Just to repeat that, if you are on the audio line online, and have comments to share, please press star six, and that should unmute your line.

2:28:59

So, again, star six will unmute the line, well, it is hard for us to be able to see at the moment who is actually on the phone bridge when you come off of mute, so we may have to work this a little bit differently.

2:29:17

Is there an individual that would like to come off mute and try first, or provide your comment?

2:29:35

Adam, I think, we have to acknowledge that folks would only have gotten the information that we provided earlier today and may be looking for a chance to download it.

2:29:48

Think about it.

2:29:49

Talk to their, colleagues, to come in.

2:29:54

I do think that Mr. Cagey has another question.

2:29:58

So, I am going to specifically unmute lines how he can share his comment.

2:30:05

Thank you, Laura.

2:30:05

Mr. Cagey can you hear me?

2:30:10

Yes, sir.

2:30:12

I got not for you, but maybe for your higher ups and whether or not, because this is kind of the beginning, of what we need to do for Indian Country.

2:30:25

And the number we heard the other day was more like, 7.2 billion, and is the organization going to be with us in the long run or just a one-shot deal for us.

2:30:40

Oh, the, oh, the question about the larger NTIA, as a whole and there's position on Indian Country is what it sounds like you are asking about.

2:30:51

Yeah, so is this going to be a long-term relationship, we are building with you folks, or is it just a billion dollars, and then you are gone?

2:31:02

That is, that is a great question.

2:31:05

Doug, if you are on the line, and you are prepared to give comment, or if you are willing to give comment on that at this time, please feel free to jump in.

2:31:18

And, if not, um, that is, this is absolutely a question we can take back, Mr. Cagey, but Doug is actually the right person to probably address the, the larger NTIA organizational question that you have asked.

2:31:36

I will remind everybody.

2:31:38

Oh, go ahead, Laura.

2:31:40

I was just going to say, I am not sure if Doug is muted, or not? I will add as a matter beyond this, I think organizationally you have a commitment from a number of us who work for this organization. And have for a while in terms of, another. I think, you said 7.2, which means we are short six point two billion dollars.

2:32:04

That would be a Congressional action, and not something we can do without it.

2:32:12

But certainly, I think you have some commitment on our part to be a part of the solution with the resources that we do have.

2:32:24

Because, again, Laura, this this, this money will only take us so far.

2:32:30

You know, and we have got to understand that the organization has to stand with us when we are with Congress.

2:32:36

The plan that we have to fully connect all of our Indian people.

2:32:42

We want to make sure you guys are going to be a good partner for us in a way that you stand with us, and we are talking to Congress saying, we need another billion dollars or \$2 billion to move forward, know, that is the future.

2:32:56

We want the best for our kids.

2:33:00

So, we want to make sure that we are well prepared, going into the future.

2:33:06

All right, give me just a second.

2:33:07

I am going to try to make sure that I unmute Douglas Kinkoph who is our Associate Administrator.

2:33:18

Unfortunately, I am looking.

2:33:25

His phone line appears to be grayed out.

2:33:35

I am sorry, I do not know how. I cannot figure out how to unmute you.

2:33:38

Give me a few minutes and see if we can do something. Gilbert. can you try to unmute all of the lines and see if that will not?

2:33:50

And then, Doug, you would have to press star six if you are on audio.

2:33:57

Yeah, I unmuted all the ones that are not.

2:34:02

Yes, we can hear you, OK, you can hear me.

2:34:06

Yeah, so I got picked up in the muting and unmuting of the lines there.

2:34:09

No, I think, Laura, you are right, we would love this be a long-term proposition with the tribes.

2:34:17

We are all in on the need for the support for broadband in the tribal territories, the funding comes from Congress, and ultimately. They have given us a billion.

2:34:28

And then we will administer that, along with the minority program and the others.

2:34:35

And then, we hope this be a longer term, but that is really indicative of whether or not Congress gives us additional funding for tribal areas.

2:34:48

Adam, back to you.

2:34:50

Thanks, Doug.

2:34:51

I would just like to add, to Doug's comments, that while, again, the dollars are tied to the Congressional appropriations process, one of the things that we highlighted, as we are going through the topic areas, was really wanting to understand a way.

2:35:12

I have heard the \$7 billion number thrown around.

2:35:16

But I have also been told that that number does not include the needs that are in Alaska, or maybe also out in the Hawaiian Islands. And so, for the Hawaiian homelands.

2:35:28

And so, what I, what I can commit to this is that we are looking at finding a way to come up with the total need in this process to help to try to quantify and put a real number to the need directly from the application or reporting process.

2:35:47

In order to have that data point to provide to the tribes and the organizations to use, I have to be careful here, to be able to use it how you see fit2:36:00

in your advocacy.

2:36:02

with Congress.

2:36:04

So, I apologize Councilmen Cagey for the Fed Speak, but that is probably as far as we could probably take the response and I know it is definitely not exactly what you were looking for.

2:36:19

So, I do apologize for that, but I do thank you for, for raising your concern, and, again, what we are doing here today is establishing a record of those needs, of those wants, of those asks, both of this program and it's absolutely fair game to raise where you see what it is that you would like to see from NTIA to sustain the tribal broadband needs in Indian Country, so thank you for those for your words and for your feedback.

2:36:51

Laura?

2:36:53

All right.

2:36:54

I am going to let folks know that I have gotten a request for the link, for the other two events that are next Wednesday, the 10th, and next Friday, the 12th, the same timeframe on the East coast, 1 PM to 5 PM.

2:37:15

And, sorry, I can quickly do the calculation of what that means, if you are at Central Mountain or Pacific. It is available on our website, and I am going to work to get that link up.

2:37:33

Via the chat or the question, And I do see, we have one more hand up.

2:37:39

I am going to, Will Micklin, I believe, it is the name, and I am going to try. It is gone now.

2:37:48

I am here.

2:37:49

Oh, all right.

2:37:55

Thank you.

2:37:56

So, I am just going to take advantage of the time, just a couple of more notes here, Adam.

2:38:04

The recommendation that the eligible entities defined in Section A8D?

2:38:22

The tribal organization defined in Section A8D the interpreted to include all eligible entities listed under Section A8: south-east Alaska, as you may know, [inaudible] is a regional tribe. There is 18 [inaudible] tribes.

2:38:42

And there is a Sealaska corporation is the regional corporation. The potential is for one or more to join in an application.

2:38:57

And I do not see that specifically provided for in the in the act.

2:39:04

But if that were interpreted to be a tribal organization, then that would satisfy that requirement.

2:39:13

I think that would be very beneficial.

2:39:20

Second, the that right of ways or easements required for an application?

2:39:33

, Not be required to be in the possession or executed prior to award of a grant, and that could be forward looking, it is a very short time period as far as I can calculate, it seems like May 26th, is a key date for getting this program activated and that is a such a short date, that some components of an application maybe forward looking.

2:40:06

And certainly, easements would be included, rights of way, could be included among them.

2:40:15

The technical burden for an application under such a short timeframe, will hopefully not be extensive, that has been the obstacle for many tribes, for, these technical subject matter, like, broadband, or energy, and retaining technical advice, or having the funds for technical advice with limitations on support.

2:40:46

from the assistant secretary in the Act. And also, to the timeframe, somewhat kind of precluding as a practical matter.

2:40:57

That these applications are not evaluated on a purely technical basis.

2:41:05

I know that it can be challenging for the equitable distribution requirement, but I think it is just a practical reality that it is going to need to be dealt with.

2:41:21

And, finally, for the Tribal land's component, for the broadband service and the connectivity program to be on tribal lands, it seems as if on the that requirement under C1Abroadband service on tribal land.

2:41:51

It is different than section B remote learning Telework Telehealth resources during the Covid 19 pandemic, section B does not cite Tribal land.

2:41:59

So, it seems that likely is intentional, given that extension of Telehealth telemedicine.

2:42:09

Typically, is from IHS or other Healthcare anchor institutions that may be widely centralized and not on a particular tribe's land would need be served or connected.

2:42:27

through off, across nontribal lands, the broadband Service on tribal lands, I think we need to be careful here in the interpretation that many tribes have checkerboard reservations or tribes that have connectivity to backbone through the middle mile.

2:42:50

May need a portion of that to be, are likely to be off of Tribal land.

2:42:57

Right, hopefully, the interpretation will not be that the entire, every segment of the, the project defined in the application need be on tribal land.

2:43:11

Certainly, if we are going to access a backbone to bring broadband services onto reservation, which would presume that, unless the tribe is, has backbone traversing its reservation, which would be rare, that there need be some segment of the project off of tribal land.

2:43:37

I am not sure you are going to be able to find many projects that do not have that component, so I think that is a necessary consideration. So, thanks for additional time, appreciate.

2:43:50

No, absolutely Vice President Micklin, thank you for the feedback and uh, and sharing with you what you wanted to make sure we are considering in this process as we.

2:44:04

Again, get these items on the record and understand what some of the things are that you would like to see to make this program successful.

2:44:12

For solving the Digital Divide Challenges that you are having, and you bring up a very fair point.

2:44:17

There are some that have location next to backhaul or backbone.

2:44:22

There are others that are going to require, And a number of you have shared it on the call today, that, that are, have required you to go off in order to solve the, the challenges that you are facing. With this.

2:44:34

There is some element that you are seeking, or that you see as part of an infrastructure project that would require you to go off reservations.

2:44:41

So those absolutely heard loud and clear.

2:44:45

I know that some members of the team at NTIA, including Jennifer Duane, and Doug himself as well as Laura and Jean Reiser are tracking these items, so thank you for your feedback and providing that clarification for us.

2:45:03

Laura?

2:45:06

I do not have hands up at this time.

2:45:13

I will make the offer, again, that we can open the line, open all of the lines, and then if you are on audio online, you would have press star six to activate your specific line, so Gilbert, could you open the lines?

2:45:36

The lines are open Laura.

2:45:39

Thank you.

2:45:51

OK, star six is the code to come off of mute, for those of you.

2:45:58

Oh, there is a voice. Who do we have? Name, please? Title and tribe you are representing.

2:46:06

Good afternoon. My name is Daryl Hernandez. Sioux Tribe, actually, liaison.

2:46:13

This is probably the first time we had a conversation about the broadband. Is that right?

2:46:21

This is just a consultation between tribes.

2:46:25

This is a government-to-government consultation relating to the tribal Broadband Connectivity Program, which is housed in the HR 133 that was passed here just before Christmas. Yes?

2:46:43

Scanning, I think my colleague, is still online might be listening, Weston is, actually spearheading this type of mission with me and OST legislative Liaison in the President's office.

2:46:58

I just wanted to be able to extend our excitement to be able to get this broadband up and going and see if we are on the right track and if there is any resources that we need. I know, it is just one milestone after another, you know.

2:47:17

It is a marathon, not a sprint, and we just need to get our ducks in a row, and get things going.

2:47:22

But I think our last Councilman that jumped on here hearing his concerns. I think he is from Washington. And I had to probably just piggyback off him and what our crisis here.

2:47:34

In the area we cover around 3.2 million acres, nine districts, and over 46,000 tribal members. But in that aspect, we have a lot of tribal members that do not have that type of access for Internet and capabilities.

2:47:55

And it is much too expensive in a way. So obviously, mine would be affordable, making sure it actually can be done.

2:48:06

doing its job and away having that positive continuity.

2:48:10

Going from district to district and making sure that the line of sight and communication is going to be well fed and well set in stone. I just wanted to extend a heartfelt handshake to all of you that is listening in today and hopefully we can get this ball rolling and proceed on. I do appreciate your time.

2:48:34

Thank you, Mr. Hernandez. For your feedback and your participation in today's session?

2:48:39

I think we all echo the excitement both the tribes, as you have heard today and frankly.

2:48:46

Those of us that have been working on the federal side as well, this is an exciting opportunity to really address a major need that Covid has shined a light on.

2:48:58

It has been there a long time. Covid seemed to do that. I think we all see this as an exciting step towards really solving a big problem. There is a lot of motivation behind everybody. Your good wishes and friendly handshakes are much appreciated across the board. Thank you for joining us today.

2:49:16

Of course, thank you very much.

2:49:18

OK, so star six to mute and unmute yourself. Is there anybody else that we have on the line?

2:49:42

Just give it another 10 or 15 seconds, while I am sure folks are having to unlock their phones and come off of mute or punch in the star six. So, we will just give it another second here.

2:49:54

Adam, I will use this time while folks are hunting buttons, to let folks know that we did post in the chat box, the link to our website, which takes you to the registration for the sessions next Wednesday and Friday at the same time.

2:50:18

Thanks, Laura.

2:50:20

Yeah, so just to re-iterate the chat box, it will get you over to the NTIA website, where all the information is regarding this specific program, the dear tribal leader letter, as well as the consultation schedule.

2:50:35

We will give it maybe just 10 or 15 more seconds, and if not, we will move forward into, into closing this out.

2:51:08

OK, well hearing, none, if we could, if we could go ahead and move to the to the next slide, please.

2:51:18

Regarding the next steps we will say it and then we will put it up on the screen, right.

2:51:25

If there is, if there's additional information can be found, as I just mentioned on that, on the BroadbandUSA@ntia.gov website.

2:51:37

Again, we encourage you.

2:51:39

this is not a one and done if you would like to continue to engage, or there are more thoughts that you have as you go through the weekend, and at the beginning of next week, or you just were not prepared to share your comments today.

2:51:50

You just wanted to listen, and you want to be a part of the, of the discussion and provide that feedback next week, we want to encourage you to join us again, same time that we would be starting.

2:52:01

We are looking at meeting again February 10th, which is next Wednesday and February 12th.

2:52:07

Again, there is also the option to submit your responses in writing to
BroadbandUSA@NTIA.gov

2:52:16

the whole purpose of this process is to make sure that we are getting the right information.

2:52:26

Obviously, establishment of a record to develop that, so that we can have a thoughtful equitable process to access these dollars through the NOFO.

2:52:36

Again, you can sign up for the mailing list as well. That is available through the site.

2:52:43

Then also, just a quick plug for things outside of the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. On March 17th, NTIA will also be hosting a larger Grant Program Session, if you want to look at some of the additional parts of funds that are out and available.

2:53:04

So, with that, I will move forward. And starting to wrap, I want to thank everybody for your time and participation.

2:53:12

I know this is probably not the best platform to conduct a consultation, and to be candid.

2:53:18

Had we had different timelines outlined in the statute, I think we could have probably done this a little bit differently.

2:53:27

I do want to say thank you for your flexibility.

2:53:30

We have constructed all of this in, frankly record time. I have never seen anything like this before, where we have moved so quickly to not only establish the content on which to consult to pull off the consultations in a sub-60-day timeline.

2:53:47

I do want to thank you for your patience and your flexibility in this process and, and frankly for your candor in expressing your concerns for those of you that did today to make this a good program.

2:53:59

And know that, from the folks on the government side of the discussion.

2:54:05

that everybody is very motivated to try to solve the problem, the best we can with the resources that we have and do it in a good way.

2:54:15

I want to thank all of you for, again, your flexibility and your time.

2:54:21

So, with that, we will go ahead and conclude today's session, We again, encourage you to submit your responses in writing, and if you could continue to be safe, be well. [Traditional Native language] ...and thank you for joining us today.

2:54:38

That will conclude the consultation.

2:54:42

Yeah Adam. This is Joe. Can you hear me?

2:54:46

I can, Joe.

2:54:48

Yeah, I just wanted to appraise the audience about the document that was provided through a report of the Federal Communications Commission.

2:55:01

It came from the tribal members, of the Task Force, titled recommendations for improving required tribal engagement between current providers and tribal governments.

2:55:24

So, a lot of the things that, were discussed as solutions or as problematic areas

2:55:31

That were talked about today, are basically covered in this document

2:55:40

It is available at FCC so people would like, to learn a little bit more about what is available you all might benefit from that as well.

2:55:50

Thank you, Thank you, councilmember Garcia.

2:55:53

Appreciate that, and we will definitely be taking a look at that. We have, we actually have been looking at that document.

2:56:00

We will continue to, to make sure that we, again, as part of the establishment of a record today, that we continue to look into those recommendations brought forth by the Native Nations Task Force. Thank you for that reminder.

2:56:15

Right, thank you.

2:56:17

All right, everybody. Well, please have a safe fun filled weekend.

2:56:23

And, again, My heart is good, and everybody have a great rest of your day.

2:56:30

Thank you for joining us.

[END]

