# Agenda

# Local Coordination Overview & Requirements

# NOFO Local Coordination Requirements

The Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs) for both the Broadband, Equity, Access & Deployment (BEAD) Program and the Digital Equity Act Programs introduce requirements for coordination and stakeholder engagement.

## BEAD Program

**5-Year Action Plans** must be informed by collaboration with local and regional entities, including outreach to underrepresented communities, unions, and worker organizations

- In the Five-Year Action Plan, each Eligible Entity must provide a description of its external engagement process, demonstrating collaboration with local, regional, and Tribal (as applicable) entities (governmental and non-governmental) and reflective of the local coordination requirements, including outreach to underrepresented communities and unions and worker organizations.

**Initial & Final Proposals** must describe the Eligible Entity's coordination with local and Tribal Governments, along with local, Tribal, and regional high-speed Internet planning processes

## Digital Equity Act Programs

**State Digital Equity Plans** submitted under the State Digital Equity Planning Grant (SDEPG) Program must include a description of the coordination and outreach strategy, including opportunities for public comment by, collaboration with, and ongoing engagement with representatives of each category of covered populations within the State

# Local Coordination is Key to Program Success

Robust local coordination across the BEAD and DE Programs has several benefits, including:

**Opens a dialogue** to better identify and understand community priorities and needs

**Fosters joint ownership of the state/ territory's mission** through partnerships that will drive success
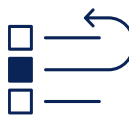
**Builds early buy-in** for high-speed Internet plans and energizes stakeholders, mobilizing others to take action toward broader goals

**Reduces barriers** to high-speed Internet access and adoption and has a positive impact on initial adoption rates

**Improves transparency**, which can **build trust and credibility**

Ensure that the **needs and priorities of stakeholders** that have historically been left out of public planning processes are taken into accounted for

# What is Local Coordination?

When assessing whether local coordination and outreach efforts meet BEAD programmatic requirements*, the Assistant Secretary will assess whether plans and activities undertaken ensure:

| **Full Geographic Coverage** | **Diverse Stakeholders** | **Awareness, Outreach, and Participation** | **Transparency** | **Underrepresented Engagement** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Coordination must include Tribal, rural, suburban, and urban areas | Coordination must include diverse stakeholders | Coordination must include multiple mechanisms to ensure broad awareness and participation | Coordination must include clear procedures to ensure transparency | Coordination must include communities that have historically faced barriers in participating in federal programs |
| Each political subdivision and Tribal / Native entity must be given an:<br>• Opportunity to submit a plan for Eligible Entity consideration<br>• Opportunity to comment on Eligible Entity proposals | Eligible Entities must ensure Tribal/Native Entities are involved in developing plans (incl. via a formal Tribal consultation process)<br><br>Example stakeholders include State agencies, CAIs, community orgs., non-profits, etc. | Example mechanisms include listening sessions, public meetings, websites, social media, etc. | Examples include websites, periodic reports, in-person meetings, etc. | Examples include an advisory board with representatives, surveys to better understand needs, etc. |

*These five requirements are not specifically defined in the SDEPG Program NOFO; however, States and Territories are encouraged to conduct local coordination activities in tandem for both the BEAD and SDEPG Programs in fulfillment of the requirements of both programs.*

# Full Geographic Coverage

|  | **BEAD** | **State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program** |
|---|---|---|
| | **NOFO Requirements** | |
| **Geographic Diversity** | Local coordination efforts of each Eligible Entity must include **diverse stakeholders from Tribal, rural, suburban, and urban areas** to the extent applicable | Each State Digital Equity Plan must include a coordination and outreach strategy that addresses engagement with representatives of **each category of covered populations** within the State and with the **full range of stakeholders within the State** |
| **Local Plan Submission** | Each political subdivision and federally recognized Tribe must be given an **opportunity to submit its own local plan** to the Eligible Entity for consideration in the development of the Eligible Entity's Proposals.<br><br>Each Eligible Entity must **detail how it addressed each submitted plan** in each relevant Proposal | Each State Digital Equity Plan must include a description of how **local, municipal, regional, and/or Tribal digital equity plans will be incorporated** into the State Digital Equity Plan |
| **Local Feedback Opportunities** | Each political subdivision and federally recognized Tribe must be given an **opportunity to comment on the Proposals** of the Eligible Entity | Each category of covered populations and the full range of stakeholders within the State must be given **opportunities for public comment** on the State Digital Equity Plan |

# Full Geographic Coverage

Engaging a diversity of stakeholders across each State and Territory is important to collecting a diversity of perspectives and experiences that will inform high-speed Internet plan development.

*Best Practices*
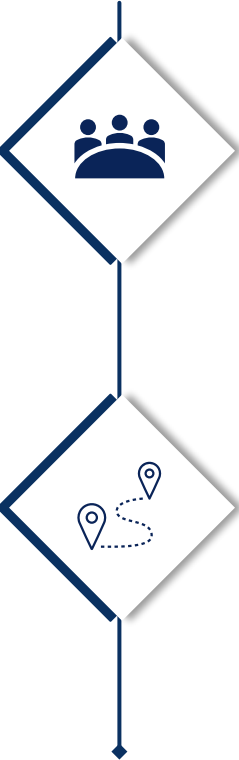
### Engage with a variety of stakeholders across all areas of the State/Territory

- Invite stakeholders with a diversity of priorities and opinions to provide their perspectives to understand their local community needs and collaborate on BEAD/DE activities
- Engage with stakeholder groups of different types and from all areas of the State/Territory to provide recommendations, suggestions, insights, and support
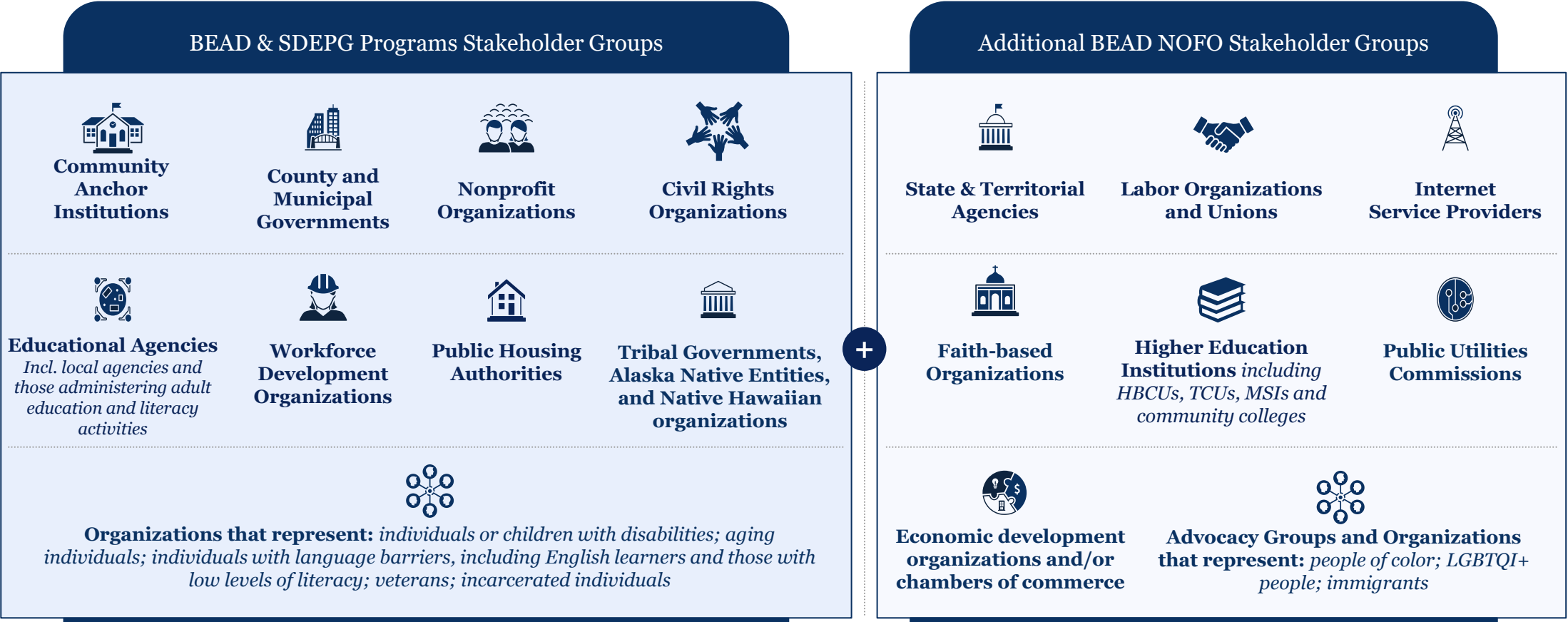
### Ensure all voices are heard

- Some communities may not have resources to develop and submit their own plan; proactively reach out to, engage, and meet with these groups to solicit input on developing plans, incorporate feedback into the plan, communicate changes, and continue providing options for commentary

# Diverse Stakeholder Groups

The NOFOs of the BEAD and SDEPG Programs outline key stakeholders that Eligible Entities and Grant Recipients may engage.

## BEAD & SDEPG Programs Stakeholder Groups

**Community Anchor Institutions**

**County and Municipal Governments**

**Nonprofit Organizations**

**Civil Rights Organizations**

**Educational Agencies** *Incl. local agencies and those administering adult education and literacy activities*

**Workforce Development Organizations**

**Public Housing Authorities**

**Tribal Governments, Alaska Native Entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations**

**Organizations that represent:** *individuals or children with disabilities; aging individuals; individuals with language barriers, including English learners and those with low levels of literacy; veterans; incarcerated individuals*

**+**

## Additional BEAD NOFO Stakeholder Groups

**State & Territorial Agencies**

**Labor Organizations and Unions**

**Internet Service Providers**

**Faith-based Organizations**

**Higher Education Institutions** *including HBCUs, TCUs, MSIs and community colleges*

**Public Utilities Commissions**

**Economic development organizations and/or chambers of commerce**

**Advocacy Groups and Organizations that represent:** *people of color; LGBTQI+ people; immigrants*
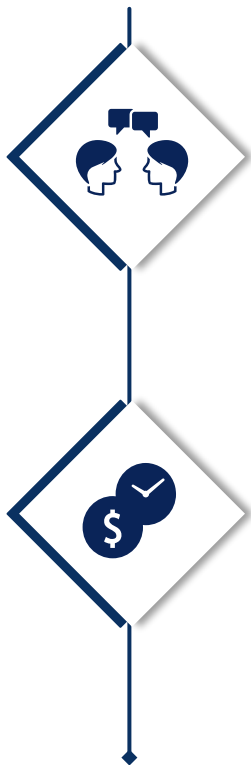
# Diverse Stakeholder Groups

Strong stakeholder engagement can support the development of an inclusive, ambitious, and responsive high-speed Internet plan grounded in a deep understanding of community needs and challenges.

## *Best Practices*

### Engage a large and diverse group of stakeholders

- Feel empowered to collaborate with other groups not explicitly named in the NOFOs, including members of communities who have experience living a disconnected life
- Incorporate a diversity of voices to develop a 360-degree understanding of each community's needs

### Build trust and credibility

- Building strong relationships may be time-consuming and resource-intensive, as you work to identify the right groups, begin outreach, and develop working relationships.
- Identify which topics are most impactful and invest early and often

# BEAD | Awareness, Outreach & Participation

Eligible Entities should employ **multiple awareness, outreach and participation mechanisms** to ensure broad awareness of and participation in local coordination and stakeholder engagement activities.

This should be accomplished through facilitating **broad outreach efforts that promote engagement in different ways to ensure that all communities are included.**

## Example Methods

- *Listening sessions, or public meetings (in-person within the community and virtual)*

- *Eligible Entity websites and/or email address to submit comments directly*

- *Informational materials such as fact sheets, brochures, Frequently Asked Questions, and newsletter*

- *Social media (blogs, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.)*

- *Email notifications and use of traditional mail*

- *Utilization of community anchor institutions to help promote and distribute information*

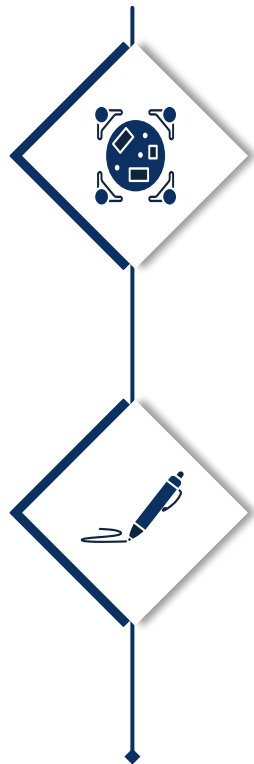- *Local Advertisements and Public Service Announcements*

# Awareness, Outreach & Participation

Engaging local stakeholders and communities in the creation of solutions can improve the responsiveness and sustainability of results.

## *Best Practices*

### Leverage existing forums for collaboration

- Identify and leverage existing engagement processes, mechanisms, and touchpoints (e.g., groups that meet regularly) to maximize efficiency and reach
- Don't recreate the wheel – not all local coordination needs to be a new convening. Ask to attend stakeholders' regular meetings and events to build relationships and encourage participation from stakeholders

### Co-create solutions

- Solicit direct feedback from stakeholders on high-speed Internet plans as they are developed (during pre-planning and throughout the planning process). Sharing sections while the plan is still under development will improve plan relevancy, transparency, and buy-in

# Transparency

**BEAD:**

In conducting local coordination and outreach activities, Eligible Entities must **establish, document,** and **adhere** to clear procedures to ensure transparency.

This includes **publicly posting the Proposals** prior to submission to NTIA as well as **plans or comments** submitted by local political subdivisions or Tribal Governments and explanations of how local recommendations were addressed.

Each **political subdivision and federally recognized Tribe** must be given an **opportunity to comment** on the Proposals of the Eligible Entity.

## State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program:

The State Digital Equity Plan developed with planning grant funds shall include a coordination and outreach strategy, including **opportunities for public comment** by **representatives of each category of covered populations** within the State and with the **full range of stakeholders** within the State.

In addition to providing opportunities for public comment from diverse stakeholders on the State Digital Equity Plan, States must utilize a variety of communications media (e.g., online, print, radio) and provide information in languages other than English when warranted based on the demographics of the stakeholder communities.

**To promote and document transparency, Eligible Entities may:**

- Host easily navigable websites with up-to-date, publicly available information

- Conduct periodic reporting & submit reports to local and community stakeholders
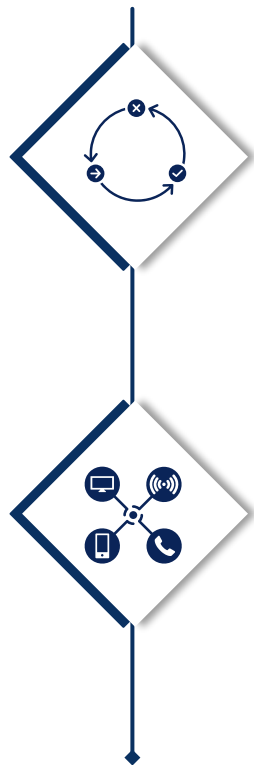
- Involve diverse stakeholders in the planning, implementation, and execution of coordination and outreach efforts, activities, meetings, and communications

# Transparency

Establishing a sustained, transparent approach to local coordination is key to building trust and demonstrating responsible stewardship of state and local resources.

## *Best Practices*

### Establish procedures and relationships that promote *sustained* coordination

- Engagement with communities should be ongoing and continuous – involve stakeholders at all stages in the development of plans to improve participation, promote buy-in, and sustain engagement
- Go beyond posting information online and opportunities to comment on a completed plan – work with communities and stakeholders to gather data and input before plans are completed
- As plans mature, the objectives of your stakeholder engagement may change—but you should continue to thoughtfully include stakeholders throughout your efforts

### Commit to transparency and accessibility

- Communicate early and often about plan development. Offer clear guidance on how to give input (e.g., an email, website, phone number, or address), consider periodic reports (monthly, quarterly, or annual), and strive to make up-to-date data available
- Keep accessibility and inclusivity top of mind– understand your audience and plan meetings and design materials that are inclusive of people who have vision, hearing, mobility, cognitive and other disabilities

# Underrepresented Engagement

## BEAD

Engagement efforts must address the needs of **unserved, underserved**, and **underrepresented communities within the Eligible Entity**.

Underrepresented communities have historically faced **barriers in participating in federal programs** and therefore Eligible Entities must identify these communities and determine **specific outreach and engagement strategies tailored to their needs**, including providing outreach in the languages used in the communities these eligible entities serve.

## State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program

The State Digital Equity Plan must include a coordination and outreach strategy that includes ongoing engagement with representatives of **each category of covered populations** within the State and with the full range of stakeholders within the State

### Covered Populations:

- Low-income households
- Aging populations
- Incarcerated individuals
- Veterans

- People with disabilities
- People with language barriers
- Racial and ethnic minorities
- Rural inhabitants

# Underrepresented Engagement

All local coordination, stakeholder engagement, and outreach should be coordinated early on and done in tandem for both the BEAD Program and the DE Planning Program to fulfill the requirements of both programs.

## *Best Practices*
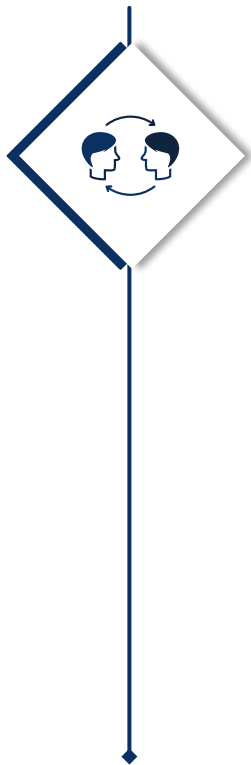
### Pursue an integrated, holistic approach to stakeholder engagement

- Though the BEAD and the SDEPG Programs are separate, a holistic approach to stakeholder engagement will reduce the burden and confusion on stakeholders and contribute to stronger end results
- Eligible Entities/States participating in both programs should pursue combined efforts, which may include:
  - Assembling comprehensive lists of stakeholders, identifying overlaps, and coordinating or combining outreach to those stakeholders
  - Planning and hosting combined listening sessions, surveys, and site visits
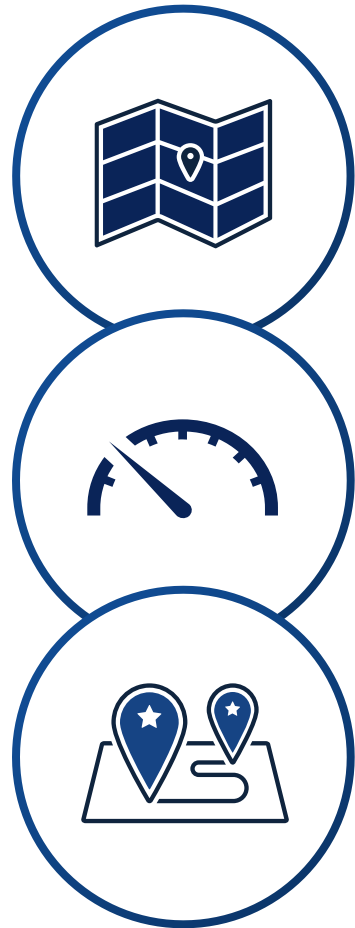  - Developing surveys and conducting asset mapping in tandem

# Tribal Consultations and Coordination

# Tribal Consultation & Coordination

Engaging Tribal Entities is key to tackling their complex and unique challenges related to high-speed Internet.

Due to a unique set of challenges related to **geography, topography**, and **persistent poverty** and **historical disinvestment** by the Federal and state governments, among other factors...

...Tribal Entities often experience Internet service that is **unreliable**, **slow**, and **expensive**, if available at all.

Engaging Tribal stakeholders is critical to **understanding these communities' challenges** and **coordinating resources** to meet their needs.

## BEAD Requirements

To the extent the Eligible Entity encompasses sovereign Tribal or Native entities, the Eligible Entity **must ensure** that such entities are **involved in development of the Eligible Entity's plans,** including, but not limited to a **formal Tribal consultation process** with the Eligible Entity.

## Digital Equity Requirements

Describe **how the State plans to collaborate** with key stakeholders in the State, including Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, or Native Hawaiian organizations

# Meaningful Consultation – Notification to Tribes

**Meaningful consultation should be conducted by the most Senior Levels of Government and be on a government-to-government basis.**

At a minimum, the Senior Official should be present to kick off before turning over to state SME staff/team.

**States need to send a Dear Tribal Leader Letter (DTLL) to each Tribal Government requesting to engage in Tribal Consultation.**

The DTLL needs to identify the topics and questions for which the state intends to consult upon and should be signed by the Governor or cabinet member.

**States should prepare questions and identify what specifically they intend to consult upon to include in the Dear Tribal Leader Letter.**

At a minimum states should ask for Tribes to share their current plans to be included in the state plan and identify if they have secured funding for implementation.

Additionally, states should ask:

- If Tribes need assistance in putting together their plans for inclusion in the state plan

- How Tribes would like to be included in the state plan and if they would like to be a subgrantee during implementation or leverage the state's expertise

- Who is the best person to coordinate with for each Tribe

# Meaningful Consultation – Consultative Process

**INTERNET FOR ALL**

**Budget Appropriate Time:** Most Consultations can last from 1-8 hours depending on the number of Tribes. Note that some states may want to conduct consultations regionally.

**Consultation:** Should always start with a Tribal leader, spiritual leader, or elder giving the **opening blessing or invocation**. NTIA's Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program team can liaise with the planning committee in the states to identify the appropriate person.

**Opening remarks** should then be offered to one delegate for each Government represented (this includes state and tribal leaders).

An **overview of questions** should be provided by the consultation moderator.

The consultation should be a **dialogue with Tribal leaders** or their designee only. Be prepared to share what you do and do not know and what you'll need to come back to the table with.

Each Tribe should have the opportunity to **engage and provide their feedback to consultation questions** posed.

# Meaningful Consultation – Post Consultation

Following consultations, States should:

Generate a **tribal consultation summary report,** documenting what they heard and any actions to be taken

Make the **recording** of the consultation available to the tribes

Make the **transcript** of the consultation available to tribes

Schedule **future consultations based upon the outcomes** of the initial consultation

# Tribal Consent will be required for projects on Tribal Lands!

# When & How to Engage Tribal Entities

## WHEN TO ENGAGE

Engage Tribal Entities at **any stage of their high-speed Internet planning journey**, including to prepare them for applying to the Tribal Connectivity Grant Program's second upcoming Notice of Funding Opportunity

Engage Tribal Entitles to **support and coordination with them for the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program** and the **Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program**

During the **development stages of grants deliverables**, e.g., the State Digital Equity Plans

## HOW TO ENGAGE

Make Tribal Entities **aware of the resources dedicated to them** under BIL

Identify Tribal Entities with **existing state and federal partnerships** or a **history of high-speed Internet planning** to **deepen connections** with them

**Assist in developing grants deliverables**, e.g. the State Digital Equity Plans

# Local Coordination In Action

# Approaches to Local Coordination

There are many different strategies that can be used to achieve a holistic and thorough approach to local coordination.

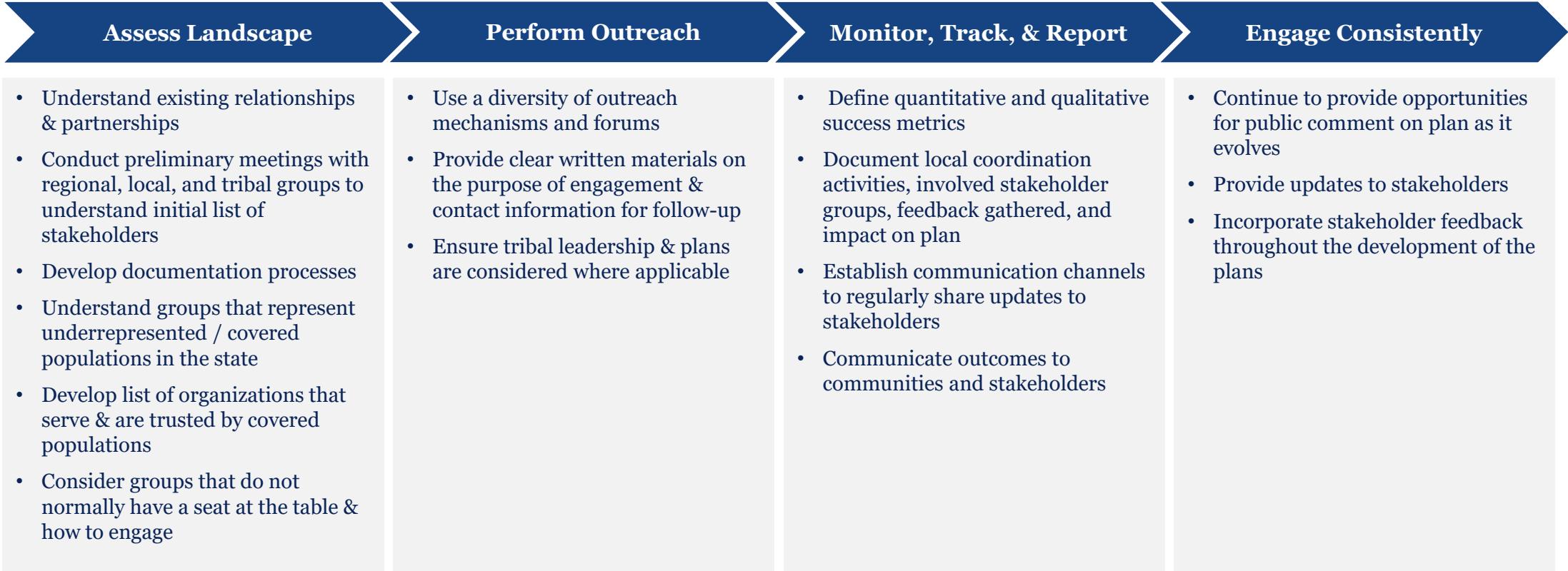| | Communication | Consultation | Coordination | Collaboration |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Description** | Sharing information and/or updates to stakeholder(s) | Direct and targeted outreach to stakeholder(s) to gather input; at times, outreach may be most successful stakeholder-to-stakeholder (e.g. CBO to community) | Coordination of interdependent stakeholder efforts | Working alongside stakeholders, sharing decision making power, data, lessons, and failure |
| **Examples** | • State or local website<br>• Social media posts<br>• Newsletters<br>• Brochures, flyers, or other print materials<br>• Public informational webinars | • Townhalls<br>• Door-knocking campaigns<br>• Regional road shows<br>• Listening tours<br>• Focus groups<br>• Surveys soliciting input | • Summits<br>• Network creation (e.g. connecting individuals in different offices working on similar efforts)<br>• Technical assistance | • Working group that co-develops plan(s) through meetings, drafting, and socialization<br>• A sustained council or task force |
| **Best suited for** | • Giving visibility to interested stakeholders, often to inform their own efforts | • Collecting input on specific asks<br>• Reaching stakeholders who may be unengaged but are impacted by high-speed Internet efforts<br>• Creating buy-in by helping partners feel heard & vested | • Connecting stakeholders already active in high-speed Internet efforts<br>• Reducing frictions to accelerate efforts | • Complex efforts that impact a variety of groups<br>• Creating a feeling of ownership and responsibility<br>• Incorporating multiple perspectives |

# Local Coordination Examples

| Communication | Consultation | Coordination | Collaboration |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Louisiana** | **Detroit, Michigan** | **Oakland Undivided** | **Minnesota** |

**Communication**

**Louisiana**

- To complement active outreach like a regional road show, Louisiana has **a monthly stakeholder newsletter** and a **centralized site** for news, events, and blogs.

- Covered newsletter topics include letters from the Broadband Office Director providing program and office updates, links to high-speed Internet news articles, and information on upcoming deadlines and events.

**Consultation**

**Detroit, Michigan**

- Established **shared values and used data to create a unified understanding**, which served as a solid starting point to appeal to decision makers.

- Kept in mind both short term and long-term needs. For example, providing hotspots allowed people to get connected as quickly as possible--but sufficient infrastructure to sustain evolving and increasing demand is another critical need.

**Coordination**

**Oakland Undivided**

- **A coalition** founded by the City of Oakland, Oakland Unified School District, Oakland Public Education Fund, Oakland Promise, and Tech Exchange, in partnership with other CBOs, coordinated to distribute a Tech Check Survey to collect accurate information about student Internet and device access.

- Survey helped target efforts to increase home access to a computer and Internet for public school students from low-income backgrounds.

**Collaboration**

**Minnesota**

- The **Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access** is made up of 15 cross-sector members who meet monthly.

- Task force serves as a bridge entity between coalitions and the state and publishes an annual report on high-speed Internet in the state.

- Task force is one piece of the "MN Model," which also includes the Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition, legislatively mandated state high-speed Internet speed goals, and an Office of Broadband Development (OBD).

# Example Plan for Outreach & Local Coordination

Eligible Entities/States participating in the BEAD and SDEPG Programs should endeavor to develop one, cohesive plan for stakeholder engagement that meets all the requirements of both programs.

| Assess Landscape | Perform Outreach | Monitor, Track, & Report | Engage Consistently |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Understand existing relationships & partnerships<br><br>• Conduct preliminary meetings with regional, local, and tribal groups to understand initial list of stakeholders<br><br>• Develop documentation processes<br><br>• Understand groups that represent underrepresented / covered populations in the state<br><br>• Develop list of organizations that serve & are trusted by covered populations<br><br>• Consider groups that do not normally have a seat at the table & how to engage | • Use a diversity of outreach mechanisms and forums<br><br>• Provide clear written materials on the purpose of engagement & contact information for follow-up<br><br>• Ensure tribal leadership & plans are considered where applicable | • Define quantitative and qualitative success metrics<br><br>• Document local coordination activities, involved stakeholder groups, feedback gathered, and impact on plan<br><br>• Establish communication channels to regularly share updates to stakeholders<br><br>• Communicate outcomes to communities and stakeholders | • Continue to provide opportunities for public comment on plan as it evolves<br><br>• Provide updates to stakeholders<br><br>• Incorporate stakeholder feedback throughout the development of the plans |

# Local Coordination Documentation

The Assistant Secretary will assess that local coordination and outreach efforts meet the programmatic requirements. For the BEAD Program, the documentation and publication of results and outcomes of coordination outreach efforts is critical. For DE Programs, documenting coordination in order to ensure transparency in plan development is a best practice. Documentation of local coordination activities may include, but is not limited to:

- ❑ Contact information (e.g., point of contact, contact's title, organizational mission)

- ❑ Engagement mechanism used (survey, phone call, webinar, committee membership, etc.)

- ❑ Thorough meeting notes, including comments collected and responses

- ❑ How comments were integrated into plan or reasons they were not incorporated

- ❑ Documentation of action items resulting from engagement activities and meetings

- ❑ Ongoing monitoring and tracking completion of action items