

**DOC-NTIA-OTIA (US)**  
**Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program**

**Moderator: Margaret Gutierrez & Sarah Bleau**  
**June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

**Carole Garner:**

1:42

Hello, and welcome to the webinar, we will begin shortly. One note before we do begin, if you are arriving and using your audio from a dial in phone or mobile device, we do want to let you know that unfortunately the recorded portion of this webinar will not be able to be heard. However, if you are on a mobile device, what you'll want to do is download the GoTo Webinar app in the Apple Store or the Android Play Store and then open the app and watch and listen to the webinar on your mobile device from the app. That will work, but if you are dialing in, you'll be able to hear us right now. But not when we start the recorded portion, we are sorry for that. If you are not able to download the app, to be rest assured, this webinar is available for on demand viewing, along with a transcript and all of the materials. And that will be available on the BroadbandUSA website no later than June 23rd. Thank you and we will begin soon.

**Margaret Gutierrez:**

03:20

Hello and thank you for joining us today for Broadband USA's webinar. I am Margaret Gutierrez with NTIA's Broadband USA Program.

03:30

As a reminder this webinar is being recorded and will be posted to NTIA's Broadband USA Program website. Today's webinar focuses on NTIA's Tribal Broadband Connectivity program.

03:43

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

03:49

Second, the presentation, along with the transcript and audio recording of today's session, will be available on the Broadband USA website within seven days of this webinar, under the Events-Past Events tab.

04:00

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

04:30

Finally, I have the honor of introducing the United States Deputy Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Don Graves, who will kick off this first webinar, following the publication of the NOFO. During the presidency of Barack Obama, Mr. Graves served as the Executive Director of the President's Council on Jobs and Competitiveness. After the Obama Administration, Mr. Graves worked as the Head of Corporate Responsibility and Community Relations and Senior Director of Corporate Community Initiatives and Relations at Key Bank. Mr. Graves was recently sworn in as Deputy Secretary on May 14th, 2021. Mr. Graves?

05:08

**Don Graves:**

Thank you, Margaret, for that kind introduction and for your leadership.

05:15

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed just how wide the digital divide truly is for America's indigenous communities when it comes to broadband access. In the 21st century economy, broadband access and affordability isn't a luxury. It's essential to everyday life.

05:29

I've seen firsthand that too often Tribal lands lack even basic cell service and only half of your residents have fixed home internet service. Clearly, the high-speed broadband that many of us take for granted, is still out of reach for many Americans, disproportionately those who are non-white and low-income. That's why President Biden proposed \$100 billion in the American Jobs Plan to close the digital divide across the nation. Vice President Harris and Secretary Raimondo recently announced that we're taking critical steps forward to achieve that goal by providing nearly one billion dollars in grants to expand broadband to unserved and underserved Tribal lands.

06:08

These grants are part of our Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program and will help your communities participate more fully in today's modern economy. The grants are flexible and cover a range of issues from broadband deployment to digital inclusion, workforce development, telehealth and distance learning.

06:26

Our team at the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, or NTIA, will ensure the funds are distributed equitably so that no Tribe is left out. I strongly encourage all 574 Tribes to apply for funding and tap into the funding we've set aside for your communities. The application is open and ready for you.

06:46

We're also working closely with our partner agencies across the federal government to roll out more funding opportunities for you in the weeks ahead. This is just the beginning. Federal resources are a critical part of closing the digital divide, but partnerships are critical too. In April, the

Department of Commerce hosted a Tribal consultation with more than 100 participants to learn how we can further Tribal self-determination and sovereignty. And we're going to continue our engagement with all of you through more consultations, roundtables, phone calls, and webinars like this one. Because a healthy and successful Indian country economy is at the heart of a prosperous American economy. As Vice President Harris said, when people are cut off from high-speed internet, they're also cut off from opportunity. And at the Department of Commerce, our mission is to create the conditions for economic growth and opportunity for all Americans.

With that, I'll turn it over now to our Associate Administrator for the Office of Telecommunications and Information Applications at NTIA, Douglas Kinkoph.

07:55

**Douglas Kinkoph:**

Thank you, Deputy Secretary Graves. I would like to thank you all for joining us on today's webinar. I'm Doug Kinkoph, the Associate Administrator of NTIA's Office of Telecommunications and Information Applications.

08:08

My team has the responsibility for implementation of the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. On June third, the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program Notice of Funding Opportunity, also known as the NOFO, was released in partnership with Vice President Harris, Secretary Raimondo, and Secretary Haaland.

08:29

The Notice of Funding Opportunity is based on Tribal Government-to-Government consultations NTIA conducted over three days in total over 13 hours. These consultations were critical to inform the Department of Commerce about the true broadband needs facing indigenous communities. NTIA believes it has released the NOFO that will assist the Tribes in meeting their own unique infrastructure and digital inclusion needs. NTIA heard Tribes loud and clear about concerns regarding verifying coverage and

09:02

We have built into the NOFO a self-certification component to hear directly from Tribes regarding broadband access on Tribal lands. NTIA is not here to tell Tribes how to do things on their lands or for their communities but to support and empower Tribal governments on the path of bridging the digital divide.

09:27

NTIA is committed to working with eligible applicants during the application window to address questions and concerns, and we'll be releasing multiple iterations of FAQs, or Frequently Asked Questions, as

inquiries come in on how best to solve the connectivity issues for Tribal communities.

09:44

NTIA also encourages Tribes to look at other Federal partners and their resources, such as EDA or Treasury and to make a holistic approach to the economic development needs of your respective communities.

09:59

The quote on your screen from Secretary Raimondo underscores this administration's goal of ensuring every Tribal member has access to broadband and the associated benefits, such as remote learning, remote healthcare, home based businesses. As the Secretary stated, this initial funding is an important step forward in reaching that goal. Again, thank you for joining us today, and I'll now turn it back over to Margaret to introduce the rest of today's speakers. Thank you.

10:34

**Margaret Gutierrez:**

Thank you, Doug. Before we begin the presentations, I would like to introduce today's speakers. Vanessa Cresci, a citizen of the Navajo Nation, was born and raised in Shiprock, New Mexico. She currently resides in Sacramento, California. Vanessa serves as one of NTIA's broadband program specialists.

10:52

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

11:04

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

11:30

Gabe Montoya is an enrolled member of the Pueblo Pojoaque located in northern New Mexico. He has served on Tribal Council for 27 years and on the Board of Directors for the Tribes' Economic Development. He brings over 10 years of experience in Tribal broadband to NTIA, including his service as a board member and chairman for Ready Net, a regional, multi governmental J.P.A collaborations set on bridging the digital divide to bring broadband services at affordable prices to their constituents for the good of their communities.

12:01

Adam Geisler is the National Tribal Government Liaison with the First Responder Network Authority serving Western Tribes, and FEMA Regions 9 and 10. He is a member of the La Jolla band of Luiseño Indians near San Diego, California and has served in an elected leadership role with his Tribe running Tribal government and shaping national policy and public health, transportation, economic development, and housing for over a decade. He has led his Tribe through four federally declared disasters, has served as Vice Chairman and founding board member of the Inter-Tribal Long Term Recovery Foundation, a Disaster Response and Recovery Organization, and is a recipient of the international Wireless Communications under 40 Leadership Award.

12:41

Now, we will turn it over to our first speaker Vanessa Cresci.

**Vanesscia Cresci:**

12:46

Thank you, Margaret. And good morning, good afternoon or good evening. As mentioned, my name is Vanessa Cresci and I will provide a brief overview of the program and define some key terms.

13:01

The Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program is available to Tribal governments, Tribal organizations, Tribal colleges and universities, the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands on behalf of the Native Hawaiian Community and Native Corporations to apply.

13:18

This opportunity provides funding to expand access to and adoption of broadband service on Tribal land or for programs that promote the use of broadband to access remote learning, telework, or telehealth during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Applications are due September 1<sup>st</sup> of this year, and no extensions will be granted.

13:46

For definitions of what the eligible entities are, we have provided a link to the Statute, and you can refer to Section 905(a)(8), which starts on page 955, for a list of all of the eligible entities.

14:08

In the NOFO, there are a couple of key terms that are important to share and review.

14:14

The first is broadband adoption, which means providing free or reduced cost broadband service and preventing disconnection of existing broadband service. A qualifying broadband service means having a download speed of 25/3, and a latency sufficient to support real-time, interactive applications.

14:40

We also want to share a couple of questions and answers that could be helpful as you determine your eligibility.

14:48

First question: Can a Tribe and a Tribal entity from the same Tribe both apply? Yes, they can with appropriate coordination. There are several instances where applicants will need to obtain a Tribal Government Resolution. In the NOFO, please reference and see Section C.3.c for more information about this requirement. Each eligible entity must coordinate internally, which includes all of the subsidiaries and departments within that entity to submit a single application.

15:19

In an instance where one eligible entity is a subsidiary of another, such as a Tribal Government and maybe a Tribal College or University, this shall not affect their Tribal College or University's eligibility to submit its own application as long as it includes a Tribal Government Resolution.

15:39

The second question- are consortiums is eligible to apply? Yes, and please see Section C.3.b in the NOFO for more details. I also just wanted to make sure I mentioned this, that there are no duplication of efforts or activities allowed.

15:59

For infrastructure applications, the applicant will require Tribal government consent that is consistent with the language in the NOFO.

16:09

In addition, the applicant cannot duplicate another eligible entity's request, and no matter who you are, the deployment of infrastructure on Tribal lands requires consent that is consistent with the NOFO language. For non-infrastructure applications, the NOFO does not require submission of a Tribal government consent documentation. However, eligible entities are strongly encouraged to coordinate with one another to avoid competing applications.

16:39

Now, I would like to transition the presentation to my colleague, Gabe Montoya.

16:47

**Gabe Montoya:**

Thank you, Vanesscia. I appreciate it. Good afternoon. My name is Gabriel Montoya. I'm a Broadband Program Specialist, with the Office of Telecommunications and Information Applications, under NTIA.

17:03

Today we're going to talk about eligible Tribal lands that are covered under this grant under Section 905(a)(13), pulled directly from the Statute that says any land located within the boundaries of an Indian reservation, Pueblo, Rancheria or former reservation within Oklahoma.

17:22

It also says any land not located within the boundaries of an Indian reservation, Pueblo or Rancheria, the title of which is held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the Indian Tribe or the individual Indian, by an Indian Tribe or individual Indian, subject to restriction against alienation under the laws of the United States or by a dependent Indian community. It also says, any land located, in the region established pursuant to section 7(a) of the Alaska Native Claims Act Hawaiian Home Lands, as defined in Section 801 under the Native American Housing and Self Determination Act of 1996, also known as NAHASDA.

18:05

Those areas, or communities, designated by the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs for the Department of Interior that are near, adjacent, contiguous to reservations with where financial assistance and social service programs are provided to Indians, because of the status as Indians. That is a unique component of this and allows us to be able to get off reservation connectivity to those people who are not on the reservation.

18:35

So, the Tribe has an opportunity to self-certify whether they're receiving broadband speeds defined as 25/3. Currently, we have used the carrier data 477 FCC form to determine whether an entity was eligible. Under the NOFO you are eligible to self-certify as a Tribal government, if you're able to provide this in writing with the NOFO on a Tribal letterhead with the appropriate signature saying that you are underserved. Provide any additional supporting information that could help determine that you are in fact underserved.

19:12

The Department of Hawaii Home Lands, they also certified whether Tribal lands as described in subsection D of the NOFO are unserved. A Tribal government may not certify Tribal lands, under the Enforceable Buildout Commitment, as defined in Section A.2.g of the NOFO, as unserved. The Tribal government must disclose whether it has terminated an existing agreement, qualifying as an Enforceable Buildout Commitment in anticipation of receiving funding under the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program.

19:47

Qualifying broadband service standard speeds of at least 25 Megabits download and 3 Megabits upload with low latency is the definition we will be using. Anything less than that is considered unserved.

20:04

So, everybody's asking where do I submit my grant? As you can see, we have our funding opportunity number here that clearly defines what is available.

20:15

So, we've made it available to register on grants.gov. We ask that you have your SAM number, DUN number, everything you've authorized because you only have a 90-day window to get everything accomplished. And some of those processes take at least 30 days to get them approved. So, make sure that your organization name matches on all those applications. Grants.gov won't allow us to see it but will allow us to pull it.

20:44

We have alternative methods. So, if you cannot go to grants.gov, you can also post mail it in. Understand that all applications are due on September 1<sup>st</sup> regardless if they are e-mailed, they are done by postal or otherwise. We are using Pacific Daylight Time.

21:11

So, application timelines. So, you have 90 days as of June 3<sup>rd</sup>, which closes on September 1<sup>st</sup>. That's the only time you have to apply. It's a very short window. Applications submitted to grants.gov must be received no later than 11:59 Pacific Daylight Time on September first or before.

21:34

Applications submitted by postal mail or courier service must be postmarked for postal mail or show clear evidence of mailing for courier submissions no later than 11:59 Pacific Daylight Time on September first, 2021.

21:51

Application submitted by electronic must also be received by 11:59, Pacific time on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021.

22:01

Under the current funding amounts, \$980 million is available for federal assistance. In accordance with Section 905(c)(3)(A) of the Act, NTIA will allocate not less than 3% of the funds, or no less than \$30 million for the benefit of Native Hawaiians.

22:23

NTIA will allocate up to \$500,000 to each federally recognized Tribe delineated by the Department of Interior's, Bureau of Indian Affairs in accordance to the Section B.3 of the NOFO.

22:37

NTIA expects to make awards under this program within the following funding ranges. These funding ranges are not required minimums and maximums but eligible entities requesting funding for projects outside of these ranges must provide a reasonable explanation for the variance of their project size.

22:57



So, for broadband infrastructure deployment projects, as an example, can go anywhere from \$1 million to \$50 million. Broadband adoption and use projects will go from \$50,000 to \$2.5 million dollars.

23:13

At this time, I would like to turn it over to Crystal Hottowe.

**Crystal Hottowe:**

23:23

Thank you, Gabe. Hello, I'm Crystal Hottowe, I'm a Makah Tribal member located in Washington state. Today I'm going to talk with you about the evaluation and scoring criteria of the NOFO.

23:39

The evaluation and scoring for both the infrastructure and non-infrastructure are very similar. There's going to be 100 points total available, and then broken down as follows. Specifically for the broadband infrastructure deployment project, the project purpose and benefit will be worth up to 45 points. That's going to be looking at the level of need on Tribal land, which will be 35 points available for that, as well as the affordability of services offered, of which 10 points total will be available for that.

24:09

Next, we'll go into the project viability, of which a total of 30 points will be available. Technical approach and related network planning, capacity and performance, there will be up to 20 points available as well as the strength of the applicant's organizational capability of which 10 points will be available.

24:34

Lastly, what will be scored as the project budget and sustainability, of which 25 points will be scored. The reasonableness of the budget will be worth up to 10 points, and sustainability of the project will be worth up to 15 points.

24:51

The non-infrastructure program, again, there's going to be 100 points total available for that. This is going to be looking at the project purpose and benefit, looking at the level of impact on Tribal lands of which 45 points overall will be available. For project viability, there will be up to 30 points available and that's going to be looking at the operational approach of the proposed project plan, of which 15 points will be available, and then looking at the strength of the applicant's organizational capability, of which 15 points will be available.

25:24

Next, we'll be scoring the project budget and sustainability, of which up to 25 points will be available. That's going to be looking at the reasonableness of the budget of which 10 points will be available and then also looking at the sustainability of the project of which 15 points will be available.

25:44

So, there are some key requirements of the act that we want to highlight. To begin with, you're going to have 180 days to obligate your fund. That's what this Section 905(c)(4)(A)(i) of the Act is talking about. You're going to need to go ahead and obligate those funds within 180 days. Next, what we want to highlight is that there's going to be a 2% limit of your administrative cut that is built within the Statute. That is not an NTIA decision.

26:19

Next, what I want to talk with you about is the year completion deadline. There's going to be a one-year completion deadline for the broadband use and adoption projects, as well as the one-year completion deadline for broadband infrastructure projects, with extensions that can be requested under certain circumstances. So, eligible entities receiving awards for new construction of broadband infrastructure must prioritize projects deploying to unserved households.

26:49

We also want to clarify a little bit more. The timeline in particular is what we want to clarify. So, the Act requires the eligible entity to complete their projects within a year of getting the funds. There are extensions that can be approved by the Assistant Secretary so long as the eligible entity certifies that it has the plan for the use of the grant fund, the construction project is underway, or there are extenuating circumstances that require an extension of time to allow a project to be completed. We understand at NTIA that one-year completion project timelines for construction may be a bit unreasonable or hard to accomplish.

27:34

So, what we want to make sure is that, that the applicants know that for the construction projects, there will be extensions or a way that you can request those. They are not going to be allowable for the broadband use and adoption projects, though.

27:54

This is some good news, right? This is a big step, no match or cost sharing required. During the Tribal consultation that happened back in February, this was one of the biggest things that came out of those 13 hours of consultation. So, on that note, there is going to be no match or cost sharing required for this grant.

28:15

With that, I will hand it on over to Adam Geisler.

28:24

**Adam Geisler:**

Thank you, Crystal. Really appreciate that. And nice job.

28:29

Hi everybody. Again, my name is Adam Geisler, a citizen of the La Jolla band of Luiseño Indians, here assisting NTIA with the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program and I'm going to walk you through the next section.

28:41

All right, so let's talk about impacts on other federal broadband programs. So how does the funding impact other opportunities that you may be looking at?

28:49

So, let's talk about that for a moment. So, the grant use of the funds received under the program, the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program, run by NTIA, by an eligible entity or sub grantee, shall not impact the eligibility of or otherwise disadvantage the eligible entity or sub-grantee with respect to participation in any other federal broadband program.

29:14

Additionally, I want to point out the NTIA encourages applicants to leverage federal, state, and other funding for holistic broadband solutions and to track these separate use and expenditures of such funds that may complement network deployment.

29:27

A lot of words there in those bullets, guys. At the end of the day, this program is not going to impede or should not impede your ability to apply for other federal funding.

29:37

We want to make clear that in addition to, should it not impede, we want you to really look at everything holistically. There's a lot of funding out there between USDA EDA, FCC, obviously here at NTIA, and what we want to encourage you to do is leverage all of those to look at a holistic approach. Let's also not forget there's funds at the state and local levels that we know you're looking at as well.

29:59

So, at the end of the day, guys, to summarize this particular slide, leverage the opportunities are out there, make sure they don't duplicate, but complement.

30:09

So, let's talk a little bit about eligible and ineligible costs. So, when we talk about broadband infrastructure deployment activities, really deploying new or upgrading broadband infrastructure on Tribal lands is 100% eligible. We know some of you out there may have networks that you're looking to upgrade, and we want to be really clear here. As long as your network isn't today providing services at 25/3, then you're welcome to upgrade that infrastructure.

30:36

For those of you that are looking at deploying brand new pieces of infrastructure to provide access to anchor institutions within your communities or for your households on Tribal lands, we also want to make it very clear that this program is absolutely something you can look at to deploy new infrastructure on Tribal lands.

30:55

In addition, broadband adoption and use activities. So, the other component of the non-infrastructure elements of this program is kind of captured in this broadband adoption and use activity section. Adoption of broadband services on Tribal lands is one element. Enable Tribal anchor institutions to provide affordable broadband services and programs, workforce development, rural remote learning, telework, as well as telehealth services. So again, guys, take a hard look at what the eligible opportunities are here.

31:26

We want to try to meet you where you're at in your broadband needs. Some of you are going to need infrastructure. Some of you are looking at broadband use and adoption activities. And some of you are looking at both.

31:36

We welcome all of those applications as long as you're an eligible entity and looking at these eligible expenses.

31:42

So, let's talk a little bit about the things that you should not be doing that are ineligible activities as it relates to the program.

31:51

No supplanting. So, any activity previously budgeted in another federal program that you already have received funding for, or that you're already in an agreement with, you're not allowed to then move those funds out, and then utilize these funds. We don't want you supplanting is essentially what we're saying. That's what we're saying when we say that.

32:08

In addition, any pre-development costs incurred prior to the NOFO release: engineering completed prior to the no phone release, feasibility studies that you may have conducted prior to the release. All of those are ineligible expenses. Again, guys, the start date of the NOFO drop was June 3<sup>rd</sup> and it concludes September 1<sup>st</sup>. So, if you're looking at expenditures or trying to be reimbursed for things that you did prior to June 3<sup>rd</sup>, unfortunately, that's an ineligible expense.

32:37

Additionally, duplicative activities. For example, last mile deployment to the same building or redundant networks. We realized that a lot of you are focusing on redundancy as part of the way that you're doing your overall

planning for your networks. And while we don't fault you would actually support the concept, for the requirements of this program, and as it relates to statute, you are not allowed to build out redundant components of those networks.

33:05

In addition, last mile deployment to the same building, if you already have fiber or connection that is at 25/3 or higher, unfortunately, you can't add another pipe coming into that facility, just as examples.

33:15

So, again, duplicative activities, expenses occurred prior to the open of the NOFO, as well as supplanting: all of those are ineligible as it relates to this program, So, sorry, but that's just the way the program has been constructed, and as it relates to Statute.

33:34

All right. So, let's talk a little bit about technical assistance. So, NTIA, we are going to do our best to offer technical assistance for this program, but let's also be real with one another.

33:45

There's a 90-day application window. There are over 574 federally recognized Tribes, plus all the other eligible entities that exist across this great country. And the reality is that the team, in the timeline, we are going to do our best to try to work with you within the timeline. But, really, at the end of the day, if we can work with you regionally, which we're going to try to do, that's really the form that we're going to try to address a lot of the technical assistance requests.

34:09

That doesn't mean that if you have a burning question or there's something that's super important that you want to find answers out to that you also can't reach out over to NTIA.

34:18

If you look through the NOFO, myself as one of the individuals that's listed in there, feel free to shoot me an e-mail, [Adam.Geisler@FirstNet.gov](mailto:Adam.Geisler@FirstNet.gov) and we are going to do our best to work out and work through the programmatic elements or questions that you may have as it relates to your application.

34:33

Monthly webinars are the other thing that I really want to highlight in terms of technical assistance. We are taking all these questions that you're firing at us during this application period and we're going to be rolling those out through an FAQ process. So, we're not exactly sure how many versions of the FAQ we're going to need to roll out. Just know that the first FAQ that's currently on the website today is not the last. We're going to take all this information. We're going to compile it, and then we're going to do our best to respond to those questions through the FAQs. In

addition, we're going to leverage our monthly webinar series to try to address those, as well. The hot topics that are out there, the burning questions that we're receiving. So, make sure that you guys are dialed into our upcoming webinar opportunities. You can see the link below. You can go to <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov>, and you'll be able to come across how you can register for our webinar series. So please don't miss out on the opportunity to engage and receive some technical assistance at the webinar series level as well.

35:35

So, next steps. All right. So, we're going to go through this 90-day, fun and exciting time to get those applications and technical assistance done. Then we're going to receive those applications.

35:47

When we receive those applications, those applications are then going to go through, over the course of the proceeding 90 days, a merit review and programmatic review process.

35:56

So, we're going to take those. We're going to triage those. We're going to run them through a review process. And then after we figure out where everybody's at, do our best to cure those applications. Because, again, we want to try to get to, yes, with everybody. The goal here is to bring forward successful applications and work with you. Then we're going to take it to a notice of acceptance and project funding.

36:17

So, after we complete our reviews, we're going to go ahead, and we're going to start to make awards, and we're going to send out those notifications to you through our grant program partner over at NOAA.

36:26

Additionally, to that, we're going to continue ongoing webinars, because we do believe there are going to be questions about the award process itself. We also realize it, as you're going through, whether it's infrastructure or non-infrastructure related elements of this program, you're still probably going to have questions. And we want to make sure that we're addressing those.

36:44

So, those are, kind of, in a nutshell, the three next steps. We're going to review. We're going to provide notice of award, or acceptance and award of project funding, and then we're going to continue to engage in those webinar series.

36:57

All right, so let's talk a little bit about the merit review component of this.

37:04

NTIA today is seeking qualified volunteers with experience and expertise, in at least one of the following areas: Broadband use and adoption, which we kind of talked about earlier, and broadband infrastructure deployment, which was also covered by my colleagues.

37:18

At the end of the day, guys, I just want to make something really simple and clear to everybody. We can only get all these applications out the door and awarded if we have enough reviewers to help us go through the applications in order to get to that point.

37:31

So, the success of this program, and the ability to get the dollars out to you is really going to be driven by our collective ability to get merit reviewers and volunteers to help review the applications as they come in.

37:44

I know some of you are wondering, or have concerns about conflicts of interest, and that's a fair question to consider or ask. So, one thing that I do want to highlight when you're thinking about if your Tribe or your Tribal entity or eligible organization or entity, is going to apply for this program, think about whether or not maybe the application team themselves, or the person submitting the application may not be the right fit. However, if you're a large Tribe or a large Tribal organization, and you have other departments that maybe have some experience in any of those areas in broadband use and adoption or broadband infrastructure, we'd love to have them come and participate with us in the merit review process.

38:23

Again, we can only get these awards out to you, as quick as we can review the applications. And, at the end of the day, guys, we expect a lot of applications, because we heard you loud and clear during the consultation.

38:35

The need is there, so help us help you in helping review the merit review process and the applications as they come in. So, if you have an interest in volunteering, you have an interest in being a reviewer, go ahead and send in your resume to [grantreviewer@NTIA.gov](mailto:grantreviewer@NTIA.gov). Super simple; name, residence, e-mail, phone number, your employer. We definitely would like to know your position and title. And then, of course, the years and types of experience that you have and the positions that you have related to the fields with the broadband activities. Again, broadband use and adoption and broadband infrastructure.

39:15

So, it seems like I'm being a little heavy on this. I am. Again, we can only be successful in the review process if we have your help in getting these applications reviewed and out the door.

39:25

In the spirit of partnership, we didn't want to not address the fact that there are other funding mechanisms that are out there today. And in particular, you will see some language in the NOFO related to Treasury. I'm sure many of you are paying attention to the funds that are happening over at Treasury. For those of you that maybe haven't heard or didn't know, we did just want to kind of share a little bit, a little bit about the program. Again, not here to speak for Treasury, but purely to put out some information regarding the other opportunities that are out there and highlighting one as an example.

39:58

So, again, the Treasury Department has about \$20 billion in Tribal funding available under the American Rescue Plan Act.

40:04

Below are the express statutory uses. So, if you're wondering, this is the first time you heard it and you're wondering what you could spend the money on, this is what was provided to us from Treasury. You can support public health expenditures. You can address negative economic impacts caused by the public health emergency. You can replace lost public sector revenue. You can provide premium pay for essential workers and yes, everyone, you can invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure.

40:33

Please contact [tribal.consult@treasury.gov](mailto:tribal.consult@treasury.gov) for further information if you want to get more details. And again, I want to thank our partners over at Treasury for sharing some of this information and allowing us to kind of help share about that program.

40:47

I also want to highlight that there's money over at EDA, USDA, and a number of our other federal partners. So please, again, look at this application process holistically.

41:01

All right. So, we're getting to the really fun and exciting part of the program, question and answer. So, at this time, I'm going to go ahead and turn it back over to my colleague, Margaret Gutierrez, and we will go ahead and then start fielding those questions on the Q and A.

41:23

**Sarah Bleau:**

Hi. My name is Sarah Bleau and I regret to inform the audience today that Margaret and Adam had a last-minute change of flight, which means they're flying home right now. They were supposed to be at home in a place where they could respond to these questions with us. But thankfully we have the team here who can assist. And we're also joined by Jennifer Duane who's the Director of our Grants Program.

41:50

So, with that I'm going to go ahead and dive into the Q&A We've had a lot of great questions. It's really exciting to see everything, all the excitement



that everybody has got and so I just wanted to thank you for taking the time to type in your questions.

42:07

Before we get into this, I'd like to ask all of the panelists, when you respond with an answer, if there's an acronym, if you can please take a few moments to explain or define your acronym. I think that that will really be helpful.

42:23

So, with that, I believe we also have Vanessa by phone. Is that correct?

42:30

**Vanesscia Cresci:**

Yes, I am here.

**Sarah Bleau:**

Alright, perfect, Thank you. So, I will begin. Here we go.

42:44

I will begin with Vanessa. This question is for you. Are there going to be technical workshops to help the communities apply?

**Vanesscia Cresci:**

42:58

We are partnering with regional organizations and associations to be able to coordinate and provide technical assistance. As Adam mentioned, there are high number of Tribes, and there's a few of us, although we can work fast. But there's just not enough of us to go around, so we'll be partnering with those regional associations. In addition, we will have topic focused webinars coming up. And those will also be available for registration on the BroadbandUSA website.

**Sarah Bleau:**

43:31

Thank you, Vanessa. That was very helpful. Gabe, I'm going to turn to you.

43:37

There's a question about which leaders of the communities can apply. Can you talk about that, please?

**Gabe Montoya:**

43:45

So, I think we would have to turn this over to the Eligibility section of the NOFO under eligibility, we have C.3.c, that defines who is eligible to apply. That's, that's where I would look.

**Sarah Bleau:**

43:59

OK, thank you, that was very helpful. Crystal, you spent some time talking about the evaluation and criteria in the award process, and I wonder, can you explain a little bit what organizational capability means?

**Crystal Hottowe:**

44:14

Yes, I definitely can. With organizational capability we're looking at your team, the experience, and the capabilities of your team. For further information, please see page 39 of the NOFO.

**Sarah Bleau:**

44:30

That was very helpful, thank you.

44:32

I wanted to take a moment and let everybody know we're aware that some people might have had audio problems. So, if you can please rest assured that within a week we're going to have this recording, as well as the content, the material and the transcripts of this conversation. The recording as well as the Q&A, all of that will be available on our website, which is BroadbandUSA, and go into events, and then past events. So, if you know of anybody who's been having difficulty listening to this, please point them in that direction and I promise you it will be available.

45:10

With that, I'd like to turn this over to Jennifer, please. And I wonder if you can please tell us where somebody could find the NOFO?

**Jennifer Duane:**

45:24

The NOFO is posted on the NTIA website BroadbandUSA ([https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/sites/default/files/2021-06/NTIA.Tribal%20Broadband%20Connectivity%20Program.Final\\_.OMB%20Cleared.pdf](https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/sites/default/files/2021-06/NTIA.Tribal%20Broadband%20Connectivity%20Program.Final_.OMB%20Cleared.pdf)) and it can also be downloaded from grants.gov. I don't have the exact links in my memory, but we can definitely provide those URLs to folks so they're able to access the NOFO. By going to the BroadbandUSA website under Grant Programs, all the relevant information about all of our grant programs is located there.

**Sarah Bleau:**

OK, and when you go to <https://BroadbandUSA.ntia.gov>, you'll go to grants, and you'll find that TBCP, the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program, will be there. That's where the NOFO will be. Jennifer, correct me if I'm wrong. I believe that's also where the FAQs will be kept correct?

**Jennifer Duane:**

Yes, the FAQs are also posted under there. We have our first round that's posted, and we'll be working on a second round to release as soon as we can.

**Sarah Bleau:**

46:22

OK, thank you, because timing is of the essence, and the crowd is very anxious. Thank you.

46:31

Crystal, I'm going to go back over to you. If you can talk a little bit, please about what the level of impact on Tribal lands means, how is that determined, and what are the variants?

46:43

**Crystal Hottowe:**

So, with the level of impact on Tribal lands, what we're looking at is the percentages of households that are going to be connected within your plan. And we go into specific detail within the NOFO, so please reference page 41 in the NOFO for that information.

**Sarah Bleau:**

47:01

I think it's really outstanding that you're able to be so specific to point people to exactly where to go to for the answers in the NOFO, thank you.

47:10

Gabe, is there a minimum or a maximum amount to apply?

47:16

**Gabe Montoya:**

There is not. This is a need-based grant. We ask that you put in what your need is, where each Tribe is eligible for a minimum of \$500,000. You can request less than that, but all your documentation does have to specify what you are requesting for and you will have to demonstrate that need that you would need.

47:41

**Sarah Bleau:**

OK, thank you. Vanesscia, back over to you. There is a question about FCC licensing. It's federal communications, excuse me. Do Tribes need to have the FCC license in order to qualify for funding?

48:00

**Vanesscia Cresci:**

For this question, I'm actually going to ask one of my team members to help me answer.

48:08

**Jennifer Duane:**

OK, sure, Vanesscia, I can. So no, we're trying to make this program as flexible as we can, so it is a program for broadband infrastructure deployment on Tribal land and wireless solutions. And we're also trying to make it, you know, technologically neutral. Wireless solutions are an eligible use as is fiber deployment.

48:34

So, to the extent that the Tribe doesn't have to be licensed by the FCC unless they're, for instance, qualified for the 2.5 gigahertz license, and yes, plan to deploy using that that license then yes, we would need to see some documentation on that. But in general, there's no requirement that a Tribe licensed by the FCC to deploy a wireless solution.

49:05

**Sarah Bleau:**

Thank you. And so, Jennifer, to piggyback on that a little bit. So, what I think that we're kind of agnostic in the type of technology used to respond to the NOFO. Wireless technology is possible like LTE and then GPON fiber or wire line technologies are eligible. The question is: Is it OK to submit both technologies in one as 1 single solution?

49:37

**Jennifer Duane:**

I mean, yes, we'd be open to looking at that. Like I said, we're trying to meet Tribes where their needs are and have them, and leave the proposed technological solution up to the particular Tribe coming in. So, if that's what they're proposing, we would definitely entertain that as a proposal that we would look at.

49:59

**Sarah Bleau:** OK, thank you. Gabe, I'm going to turn back to you.

50:05

**Gabe Montoya:** There's a question about backbone, middle mile portions of the applications, and if waivers would be provided for those that propose re-use of existing conduit but on a longer timeline for improvements, will there be extensions allowed for infrastructure projects?

I'm going to ask Jennifer if she could jump in here and helped me out a little bit.

50:28

**Jennifer Duane:** Sure, Gabe. So, I think the question is getting at well, first of all, yes, there are extensions available for broadband infrastructure projects. The legislation gave a very short timeframe of a year to expend funds, which, as we know, for broadband infrastructure projects, are, you know, very difficult, if not impossible to do. So, there is the possibility and we really expect to be granting extensions of you a one-year award period to contemplate broadband infrastructure deployment. And so, the question was getting at whether they can use existing conduit. Yeah, they can upgrade the conduit or use existing conduit for their middle mile project. And that strikes me as that would be an eligible use of the funds.

51:21

We need to know more, of course, as to exactly what the use was going to be, how it was going to be budgeted across the award period, but it strikes me as something that would be an eligible use of funds, without knowing more about the proposal.

51:37

**Sarah Bleau:** OK, Thank you. I'm going to jump over to a question that I believe that Adam covered this in his presentation. But because he's not with us today, Crystal, I think that you'll probably be able to help. The question is pre-development costs that are incurred prior to the NOFO release, those would be ineligible. However, if there are feasibility studies, surveys, et cetera that are completed after the release of the NOFO, would those qualify for funding?

52:11

**Crystal Hottowe:** Yes, they definitely will be qualified for reimbursement funding. So long as they are completed after June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021.

52:22

**Sarah Bleau:** OK, Thank you. This was a really good question that well, actually, all of these questions are really good. And we're trying to keep up with the questions as fast as we can. So, I apologize if it's taking a little bit longer for us to answer.

52:40

Please note that there will be FAQs, like Jennifer mentioned earlier, posted to the website, to BroadbandUSA, go to grants, and then go to the you'll see the NOFO as well as the FAQs for this program.

52:55

One of the questions that came up that we will respond to you in the FAQs, but I'd like to share it with everybody because it's good.

53:03

There's the question of unserved and underserved. And specifically, how underserved relates to Tribal colleges and universities or TCUs.

53:14

So just raising an awareness to the fact that various data sources will show that the average TCU has a lot less bandwidth available to it than other four-year institutions. So, that was a very thoughtful question. I thank you for asking it, and I just wanted to make you aware that we will respond to that in the FAQ. So, unless if there's anybody on the team here who wants to comment on that, please go ahead.

**Jennifer Duane:**

I think we can note that Tribal College and University is an eligible entity that can submit an application either for broadband infrastructure deployment or for broadband adoption. We only ask that they coordinate with the, you know, the Tribal government, and submit a resolution in order to come in on their own. We are certainly encouraging them to work with their Tribal government, when in devising a project proposal. There's certainly the possibility of upgrading or deploying infrastructure on a Tribal college and university as part of this program. I'd also note we have our Connecting Minority Communities pilot program also. It has Tribal colleges and universities as an eligible entity and there's also a possibility of upgrading or procuring broadband services and upgrading service on those as a Tribal college and university, as a result of that pilot program.

54:45

**Sarah Bleau:**

Thank you, Jennifer.

54:48

Crystal, thinking about the application, how much detail is required? For example, does all the engineering and design work need to be completed before an application?

55:46

What I heard was it sounded like you were underwater a little bit, but I think what you said is, and I think the message which the team here has been reiterating over and over, because it's true, is that we want to meet the Tribes where they are. And so, provide as much detail as you can. It'd be great if engineering design work were completed, but it doesn't have to be, is that correct? Jennifer, is that safe to say?

**Jennifer Duane:**

Yes, that's correct. Engineering feasibility designs are all eligible costs in the program. We recognize that many Tribes will not be in a position to

immediately deploy construction, and so we've taken that into account by allowing these studies to be an eligible use of the funds for the program. We don't expect them to be completed, you, know, before or during the application process, and that's an appropriate use of funds for a grant under this program is for Tribes to conduct planning feasibility studies in preparation for being able to deploy construction on Tribal lands.

57:01

**Sarah Bleau:**

OK, thank you. Gabe, I'm going to ask you a question that's got a few acronyms in it. And I'm not as familiar with all of these acronyms. So, I'm going to ask for your help, please. But the question is, does a Tribe's FCC TPW application shape file define Tribal lands under the NTIA TBCP NOFO? How are the NOFO Tribal lands defined really is the question for a tribe who does not have a TPW application shape file.

57:33

**Gabe Montoya:**

Yeah, I think if I understand the question correctly, the shape file is basically identifying the Tribal lands that are eligible and if we look at eligibility of Tribal lands, we allow for that to be a little more flexible to allow where social service programs are currently being had and that would then become an eligible area for service.

58:00

**Sarah Bleau:**

Thank you. I think it's worthwhile also pointing out that just today, we published on our site the Indicators of Need map, that talking about shape files made me think of it as if, I think as is it a BroadbandUSA? If you look at the news section, there's a link to an interactive GIS-based map that our team has put together so that and it takes data from ACS from Microsoft. It takes FCC 477 data. It takes data from a lot of different places, because it's important to collect data from so many different places. And the purpose of this map is to help identify, to pinpoint where broadband is needed because 25/3 is not available. So, I would encourage you all to take a look at it. It's pretty impressive.

**Jennifer Duane:**

And Sarah, I believe that we also have Tribal lands denoted on the map too. So, people could go on and see where the Tribal lands are and what broadband services currently available there. And I think, I believe that is a data layer within the map.

59:18

**Sarah Bleau:**

Thank you, thank you. Vanessa, I'm going to go back over to you.

59:27

The question is: If we have an estimate of what construction would cost for infrastructure, could an application include both design engineering, as well as the construction of the infrastructure?

59:51

And I think we might have lost Vanessa. The answer is yes, I believe. Jennifer, is that correct?

59:57

**Jennifer Duane:**

Yes, that is correct. Put in your budget these estimates. As I mentioned and Crystal also mentioned, you know, we're allowing feasibility design studies as eligible costs for the program. We recognize that tribes, the data is a necessary step in order to plan for broadband and construction and so to the extent an applicant wants to use grant funds for both design engineering and the construction. You know, indicate that in your budget and delineate the costs that are associated with those components.

1:00:35

**Sarah Bleau:**

Thank you. Thank you. And I wanted to let the audience know that Vanessa is here with us, she's listening and she's responding, but her phone is muted. It's muted itself, So, I apologize. She's here, thank you.

1:00:52

Let's see. I'm going to go back over to you, Gabe. I think that, that you'll enjoy this question.

1:01:00

How many Tribal entities partner with broadband partners in the build, operation and ownership of the funded assets under these programs?

1:01:10

**Gabe Montoya:**

You're right, I would enjoy this question. We did this because a lot of my background, you know, NTIA has allowed for the Tribe to determine what is the best partner and how many partners they should have. If it's multiple Tribes, if it's multiple partners. The liberty to decide that is at the Tribes level, just understand any Tribe that is partnering with another Tribe must have a resolution and not be a duplicate application, that they submit.

1:01:41

**Sarah Bleau:**

OK, thank you!

1:01:44

Let's see, Jennifer, when we did this webinar yesterday, there were a lot of questions about middle mile, and we have a question today as well. The question is, can these funds be used to pay for an ISP to deploy middle and last mile infrastructure? In this case, particularly, the middle mile is outside of Tribal land.

1:02:08

**Jennifer Duane:**

Yeah, sorry, I do recall that we got that question. And so, as we mentioned, middle mile is eligible. You know, we envision middle mile as an eligible use of the funds. We recognize that means that, the goal is to serve unserved households on Tribal lands, but we recognize that in middle mile deployment the entire piece of that may not fall on Tribal lands. And I think that that's understood that in order to get to the unserved populations on Tribal lands, there may need to be some deployment of

infrastructure off Tribal lands. We would need to see the exact proposal, but I don't see an issue with that not being allowed as an eligible use under the program. Middle mile is an eligible use of the funding under this program.

**Sarah Bleau:**

1:03:01  
OK, thank you.

1:03:05  
This question is about how long it takes to build networks, and I'm going to open this up back to you, Jennifer, if that's OK. But the question is that constructing fiber networks takes a long time. Right of way permits can take months or years. And so, the person who's asking wants to know if EO 13821 provides for federal agencies, SF 299 applications for permitting on federal land on an expedited timeline.

**Jennifer Duane:**

1:03:43  
Yeah, we've spent a lot of time last year as part of our American Broadband Initiative, streamlining federal permitting work stream, ensuring that the SF 299 is the common form that all federal land managing property agencies use. NTIA is an active participant in that work stream and we'll help to do what we can do to try to expedite that approval process. And we recognize that the permitting process, especially on federal lands can take time, and so we want to do what we can do to expedite that to the extent possible.

**Sarah Bleau:**

1:04:24  
Thank you. You know what, I know that Vanessa's phone has been muted, so, Crystal, I'm going to ask you if you can help answer this question, please. The question is, if funding is a one-time fund or if there are plans to deliver annual funding once broadband is delivered for ongoing connectivity.

**Crystal Hottowe:**

1:04:54  
Well, I'm going to say, first of all is my audio, OK?  
I am going to let Jennifer take it from here.

**Jennifer Duane:**

1:05:05  
Yeah, that's exactly right. This was a one-time appropriation for now. There could be some possibility of funds later on but at the moment this is the appropriation that we have, and it's not contemplated for a yearly occurrence, but there is a possibility perhaps that there might be some further funding down in future years. But right now, we're working with the \$980 million that we received for the fiscal year 2021 appropriations and are doing all we can to make sure that money gets distributed to Tribes as quickly as possible through this program.

**Sarah Bleau:**

1:06:24  
Thank you, hey Gabe. I want to circle back to you, and ask you a question, if you don't mind. Is there a website URL that has all 543 Tribal entities that are eligible? That was a question that came in.



**Gabe Montoya:**

1:06:44

Yeah, and I think we had this question yesterday, as well. There is no URL that we are aware of, but understand that, it doesn't only cover Tribal nations, it also covers Tribal organizations, Tribal colleges. Ultimately, all of those have to be shown to NTIA that you do qualify. Eligibility will have to be determined by the proposal.

1:07:09

This is this is an unusual component that NTIA is doing, is to allow the Tribes to determine yes, we are an eligible entity. And this is why.

**Sarah Bleau:**

1:07:24

OK, thank you. And Jennifer, this question came in. Adam had a point in his slide that we don't want redundancy or duplicate networks.

1:07:39

What happens, the question is, can we construct a fiber network in an area where there is network, but the owner is not providing services on that network to companies or homes along the route? And I think back to, from my own experience in telecommunications, sometimes there's just an express route, for example where it's impossible to break out and offer services along the way. So, if service is not available but there's fiber there, can an application come in to build fiber and provide services to homes along the way?

**Jennifer Duane:**

1:08:21

I mean, we would definitely take a look at that proposal, but one of the requirements in that Act is that we coordinate with the FCC and other federal vendors to avoid duplicating funding. What exactly that means,

1:08:33

We're still in the process of determining, but I think we'd take that into account if there was fiber that was nearby but wasn't servicing the particular area. You know, we would certainly look at that and factor that into our decision as to whether the project was a viable project for us and serving the needs of Tribal lands.

1:09:01

So, taking into the evaluation criteria that we identified in the NOFO to determine the level of need on the Tribal lands. That would be a factor that we would take into consideration as we evaluated the project.

**Sarah Bleau:**

OK, thank you. Here's a question that I know a lot of people have been wondering and right now this moment is the first time that I'm seeing it. So, thank you for asking.

1:09:28

This question is about RDOF funding and we know that there are some unserved areas, what the FCC called unserved that have now been granted provisional funding through RDOF. And the question is, if that provisional

funding has been awarded, how will we determine whether a project is eligible in that area?

1:09:51

**Jennifer Duane:**

It's something that will work with the FCC on. We know that with the RDOF funding, it's in the provisional stage and are working through the long form process.

1:10:01

That, you know, the definition in our Statute that we're working under, as it pertains to unserved households, is that the area lacks access to qualifying broadband service and there's no service provider receiving federal or state support, or has been selected to receive, through an enforceable build-out commitment by day certain. We actually define the term enforceable build out commitment in the NOFO to mean that a Tribal Government or its authorized agent has an existing agreement approved by the Tribal Government with an existing service provider. In our view, you know, the Tribe needed to have consented and entered into an agreement with a service provider for that area to be considered served.

1:10:58

We're going to be looking at all of those considerations when the provisional RDOF funding comes out and try to understand and work with the FCC. When they complete the long form process and issue their final selections to make sure that these areas are either going to be served by that and meet the definition within our NOFO that it is truly an enforceable build-out commitment that the Tribe has consented to.

1:11:35

**Sarah Bleau:**

OK, thank you. Jennifer, just to drill in a little bit, just as an informational.

1:11:41

There was a comment that CAF 1 and 2 awards in Tribal areas have not always resulted in deployment of broadband to Tribal communities even though nearby backbone routes. So, the ask was to please do not determine ineligible, unserved or underserved Tribal lands because of nearby broadband services or award of funds.

**Jennifer Duane:**

We definitely plan to look into that and validate service areas within Tribal land to make sure that if there is other federal funding that has been awarded there that the Tribal area is truly being served.

1:12:23

**Sarah Bleau:**

OK, thank you. And I want to remind everybody I know that we've had some difficulties with this platform on the audio and also well, here we are today talking about the need to bring more broadband and sometimes our phones are not working so well. So not all of this has been easy to follow. There's a lot of great questions, but we are going to post the recording, as well as the material and a transcript. That will be available on our website in about a week. I hope that through all of the audio issue issues that we're having, that the transcript will help you quite a bit.

1:13:04

Jennifer, one question that came up- we've talked about in this program being open for both infrastructure and as well as adoption and use of broadband and the question is, can an applicant apply for both infrastructure and adoption use in one single application?

**Jennifer Duane:**

1:13:26

Yes, they can. They can do one single submission. There are different forms to use, depending on whether you are applying for a broadband infrastructure program or broadband use and adoption. The NOFO outlines and it breaks it up into what's needed for the overall application, the standard form 424 for a broadband adoption project. We want to include the SF 424 A and B forms, and then, with the construction project, the SF 424 C and D, and then compile different project narratives to tell us what your broadband use and adoption project, what activities you're going to conduct for that and also put a budget in for that. And then also separately, have another project narrative that details what your broadband deployment project will involve and also a budget associated with those costs. But you can combine all those application forms into a single submission and submit one application submission for the program.

**Sarah Bleau:**

1:14:31

OK, thank you. I am sorry to just hammer you with questions, Jennifer.

1:14:39

But this one's about enforceable build out commitments, and if a Tribe had entered into one in the past but that contract has expired, is the Tribe correct in certifying to NTIA that no enforceable build-up commitment exists?

**Jennifer Duane:**

1:14:57

Yes, if the agreement is expired and if there was an agreement at one time, but it's now expired, then that would be acceptable for the Tribe to certify it is unserved as long as the enforceable build-out commitment was expired. What we didn't want to have is there be an existing build out commitment between a Tribal government and a service provider. As it's no longer in effect and it's fine for a Tribe to come in and certify that area is unserved.

**Sarah Bleau:**

1:15:33

OK, thank you. I believe that there's a question about latency. And I think that we have Vanessa, and I know that you're with us but your phone's muted itself. So, I'll ask Jennifer if you can please help us with this one.

1:15:54

We talked about the latency requirements in the NOFO. The latency supports real-time, interactive applications and the thought here is that that requirement might make satellite services ineligible. So, the question is will broadband service via satellite be eligible despite latency

deficiencies? I know that we're planning to meet people where they are, we want to meet the Tribes where they are and find the solutions that work.

1:16:25

**Jennifer Duane:**

But can you talk a little bit, Jennifer, about if satellite latency, specifically the GEOs, the ones that are 20,000 miles out there, as well as the lower Earth orbit specifically the LEOs like SpaceX. Would those be ineligible solutions?

We wouldn't necessarily say that they're ineligible. We did define a latency standard as part of the definition of qualifying broadband service that are at or below 100 milliseconds. But we recognize that there may be areas or circumstances where a satellite service, depending on the geography or a terrain of an area, might be the only viable service options. So, we take that into account in our evaluation criteria section under project viability where even though there is a preference for meeting that latency standard, an applicant should describe to us, it doesn't disqualify an applicant, that they should describe to us in their project narrative as to why they can't meet that standard and why that is the only viable technical solution for a particular area they're seeking to cover.

1:17:36

**Sarah Bleau:**

Thank you. I think that we're slowing down on the questions so I'd encourage, please, if there's anything that you want to talk about a little bit more, please send in your questions. There's a new one here.

1:17:53

The question is; broadband performance criteria for underserved or unserved area relies on speed and latency. Ah, this is a good question, and they all are, and I'm sorry but will other variables be considered such as jitter, percent packet drop, packet delivery and availability, data volume, etcetera, or I believe it's only the 25 Megabits per second download three Megabits per second upload and latency, right? Is that right, Jennifer?

1:18:24

**Jennifer Duane:**

Yeah, that's basically in the Statute as what constitutes qualifying broadband service. It was just the speed and latency.

1:18:34

**Sarah Bleau:**

OK, thank you. That was a very technical, good question, Thank you. Well, it is. yes, OK. Great question!

1:18:44

Gabe, do you want to add anything?

1:18:47

**Gabe Montoya:**

Yeah. No, I just, I think that was a great question, and I know it's not just the Act, but I think that's something to look at we move forward in building networks for Tribal governments to ensure that you plan for that.

**Jennifer Duane:** 1:19:01  
Absolutely.

**Sarah Bleau:** 1:19:05  
All right. I'll give the audience a few more seconds here if anybody wants to ask a question. Otherwise, I hope that we were able to answer your questions and again, please know that the answers we've provided today will be available in the transcript so you can read through these. Oh, here we go. Here's two more.

1:19:33  
If a TCU is connected at 25/3, are they still eligible to get up to one Gigabit per second? And, Jennifer, you talked earlier on about the other grant programs that we have, like the Connecting Minority Communities Grant Pilot Program.

1:19:55  
So, to answer that question, if a Tribal college or university already had the minimum bandwidth of 25/3, would they be eligible to apply for the TBCP or for the Connecting Minority Community Program to get up to one Gigabit?

**Jennifer Duane:** 1:20:17  
They could apply under this program assuming they have coordinated with their Tribal government. Again, you know, if they're coming in on their own, we want to make sure that they have the consent of the Tribal government to request funding for the program. But, you know, so qualifying broadband service, that's the minimum. But we certainly have a preference for higher speeds under the Tribal program. The Connecting Minority Communities is more adoption focused, versus actually deploying infrastructure through it. But it's certainly a program that a Tribal college or university could also consider in terms of trying to upgrade some of their service on campus, and we'll have more details about that program forthcoming in the coming weeks.

**Sarah Bleau:** 1:21:04  
Yes, And just a quick plug for the Connecting Minority Communities. If you are interested, we are doing a webinar on that program next week, Wednesday and Thursday. So again, go to our website, go take a look at events and upcoming, and you'll see that that webinar will occur next week.

1:21:21  
OK, there's all kinds of questions coming in, Thank you. This is a tough one. If awarded, what are the reporting and invoicing requirements?

1:21:35  
Crystal, how are you doing on being able to talk right now?

**Crystal Hottowe:** 1:21:44  
Let's see. Is that coming through?

1:21:48

**Jennifer Duane:**

So, first, I start talking and then that's when it starts to sound like it's going underwater. So, actually, I am trying to look through that particular question in the NOFO. So, I do know there are some reporting requirements that are listed in the NOFO if you give me just a few minutes, I'd be able to find it. I don't know if Jennifer or Gabe wanted to jump in on this?

1:22:19

Yes, we do have a semi-annual reporting requirement, a financial reporting requirement and semi-annual performance progress report so we can understand how you're doing and implementing the project. Then there's an annual reporting requirement that we set forth in the Statute and that's trying to understand what were the outcomes of the project and how many, if you did an infrastructure project, how many households and/or businesses or community anchor institutions did you connect and how did you expend the funds. So, the questions are pretty general at the moment. So, there will be those reporting requirements. As far as invoicing, we will be using our grants office, the NOAA Grants Office. So, when and if you're awarded a grant, you'll receive an account through the Treasury where you can just withdraw your grant funds. It's usually a reimbursable program. So, when you expend, then you can invoice. And then you receive the grant funds to reimburse for what you paid out with the project partners. But look, a little more information on post award requirements. When we get to that point in the program definitely, we'll be doing more webinars on, after the grants are awarded, some of the compliance obligations and reporting requirements that come with the Department of Commerce Grant.

**Sarah Bleau:**

1:23:54

Thank you.

**Crystal Hottowe:**

1:23:57

I want to refer people to page 50 within the NOFO.

**Sarah Bleau:**

1:24:04

That's very helpful. Thank you.

1:24:07

I made the comment or the statement earlier, that we've released on our website, this GIS interactive map. And, the question is, I've seen Microsoft's coverage data as an image, not as a GIS dataset. And I just wanted to clarify that we at NTIA have made public a GIS-based, it's a mapping system, and we've added it (Microsoft) as a data layer.

1:24:34

We've got census data, we've got the American Community Survey data to show percent of households that do not have broadband, that don't have computers. We've also got Microsoft data to show what actual download speeds when they send their patches. We've also got Ookla and MLab

speed tests available. So, Microsoft, MLab, Ookla, ACS, those are all layers on top of our GIS system, so that if you drill into it, you'll be able to see where it appears that there really is bandwidth, more broadband, needed. So, I hope that that answers your question.

1:25:12

Um, another question is- Will applications that propose broadband deployment for a portion of its population, due to cost constraints be favorably scored? For example, I have an appreciation for this, full broadband deployment to all of south-east Alaska would require more funds awarded than is available under this NOFO. That is an excellent point.

1:25:45

I think that we would receive the application and understand. Is that right, Jennifer?

**Jennifer Duane:**

1:25:51

That's right. We would definitely take that into account, any barriers to serving an entire area but it as long as there was an area that proposed, for service, in order to deploy to unserved areas and we would definitely look favorably on applications of that nature.

**Sarah Bleau:**

1:26:14

Thank you. Another question came in about RDOF not finalizing until August and many Tribal lands in California are included in RDOF designated census blocks. And the statement is, this could really complicate things both for the Tribes and the providers and I think Jennifer talked about that a little bit.

1:26:32

We understand, I think that we're going to add some of the complication to ourselves, and we're going to coordinate with the FCC, to make sure that if a census block actually gets the RDOF funding, we'll work and we'll make sure there's no duplication, but the provisional awards are just that provisional right now and so if RDOF money doesn't actually go to that census then we'll be working closely with the FCC to catch that. Right, Jennifer?

**Jennifer Duane:**

1:27:02

That's right. Yeah, we know it's going to be complicated and there's a lot of money from various different agencies that are out and available between the Treasury now, and with the FCC RDOF program, and then there's the USDA Reconnect program. So, there's a lot of money for broadband deployment out there. So, we want to make sure that money is targeted to areas where there is a need and unserved areas that we know are doing that. We'll do the best that we can coordinate with our other federal agencies to make sure that we're not duplicating funding. That is the overriding goal.

**Sarah Bleau:**

1:27:47

Thank you. There's so many questions coming in, so thank you. I don't know that we're going to be able to get to all of them today. I do want to point out that with all of my talk about this map that we have, and the question was asked, can you post a link? Susanna has posted that if you go to the chat box, there's a link to <https://broadbandUSA.NTIA.doc.gov>. Go to the news and within that document, you will find a link to that map. So, please go take a look. It is the coolest and most helpful, like myself being a little bit of a mapping geek, it is really a powerful tool. So, I encourage you to go take a look at that.

1:28:27

I'm going to ask one more question here and then we'll wrap things up. Again, the questions have all been excellent and very helpful.

1:28:38

And this was exactly what we wanted was to hear what were your concerns? What were your questions? How can we prepare as the team goes forward doing technical assistance, outreach over the next couple of weeks, to answer your questions which puts you in a better position to respond successfully to the grant application? So, thank you so much for taking your time to join us today and ask these questions. We will post the recording and the content and the transcript all to our website. We'll also have the FAQs posted there.

1:29:13

So, with that, I'm going to ask one more question here, and let's see.

1:29:21

Will restrictions be placed on service providers as Tribal partners? For example, liens or other requirements.

1:29:42

I don't have an answer to that question. So, I think that might be an FAQ question and I have to apologize for that.

**Jennifer Duane:**

Yeah. I guess I'm not really clear in terms of liens or what the question is getting at and so we may, Sarah, just need to take that back and try to understand it and maybe do some follow up and try to address it through an FAQ.

1:30:07

**Sarah Bleau:**

OK, sorry about that. My last question was not, I wasn't fully prepared to ask that question.

1:30:17

All right. Well, if Margaret were here asking the questions, she would have done it much better, I'm sure. But thank you, everybody. Carole, do you mind pulling up the the summary slides to show the next webinar?

1:30:38



Here we go. Thank you, Carole. Jennifer mentioned, we've got the Connecting Minority Communities Program. We also have a grant program called Broadband Infrastructure. And we've been doing webinars most months recently for these to talk about what the programs are and how people can apply.

1:30:59

So, here in the deck, you'll see there's recording, there's links to those recordings that have occurred. We've also got upcoming. We've got the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. We did this yesterday and today, and we'll do it again in about a month, on July 21st and 22nd, so I hope that you'll join us. These webinars always begin at 2:30 PM Eastern, and we can take lots and lots of people, up to one thousand.

1:31:24

So, please, take a look. Get the word out there. Go to the BroadbandUSA website and events, latest events, and you can register for it right there. And then on our final slide, you'll see contact information for the whole team.

1:31:40

If we go to the next slide, thank you. And so, we've got Margaret, Crystal, Vanesscia, Adam, and Gabe. We've got an outstanding team here, and I'm really proud to be able to be part of this conversation today with all of them. So, we want to make sure that you have their contact information as well if you don't, and please feel free to reach out. So, thank you again.

1:32:02

**All:** Bye.

**END TRANSCRIPT.**