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# Broadband Infrastructure Program

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021

June 2021



# Housekeeping

## Questions

- Type questions in the Q&A box on the right side of the screen. Questions and answers will be available on the FAQ section of our website.
- [Overview of Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 | BroadbandUSA \(doc.gov\)](#)

## Presentation

- The presentation along with a transcript and recording will be available on the BroadbandUSA website under Events/Past Events on or before June 16, 2021.
- [BroadbandUSA Past Events](#)

## **Presenters:**

- Douglas Kinkoph, Associate Administrator  
Office of Telecommunications and Information Applications, NTIA
- Jennifer Duane, Director of Grants  
Office of Telecommunications and Information Applications, NTIA

## **Moderator:**

- Susannah Spellman, Broadband Program Team Lead  
Office of Telecommunications and Information Applications, NTIA

# Agenda

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**Biden Administration on Broadband**

Doug Kinkoph

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**Broadband Infrastructure Program**

Jennifer Duane

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**Questions and Answers**

All

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**Douglas Kinkoph**

*Associate Administrator*

*Office of Telecommunications and Information Applications, NTIA*

# Biden Administration on Broadband



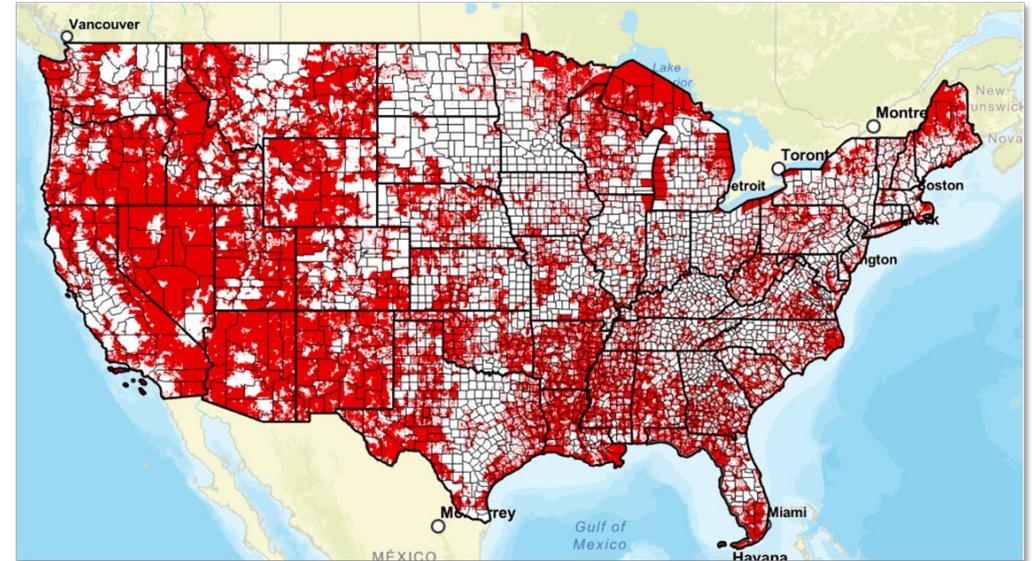
“Today, I believe we must act again and act in that way, understanding our capacity and our responsibility to connect America and to allow all Americans to have access to those basic needs that allow them to raise their families, allow them to educate their families, to do their work. And in the 21st century, broadband is critical to all of that and broadband is critical infrastructure therefore.”

*Vice President Kamala Harris on The Digital Divide, May 24, 2021*



# Millions of Americans Don't Have Reliable Broadband

- **17 million Americans do not have** basic broadband @ 25/3 Mbps.
- **20.9% of Tribal lands and 17.2% of rural lands** do not have 25/3 Mbps broadband.
- While 95.6% of household have access to 25/3 Mbps broadband, **only 68.9% of households subscribe** to service at that level or above.



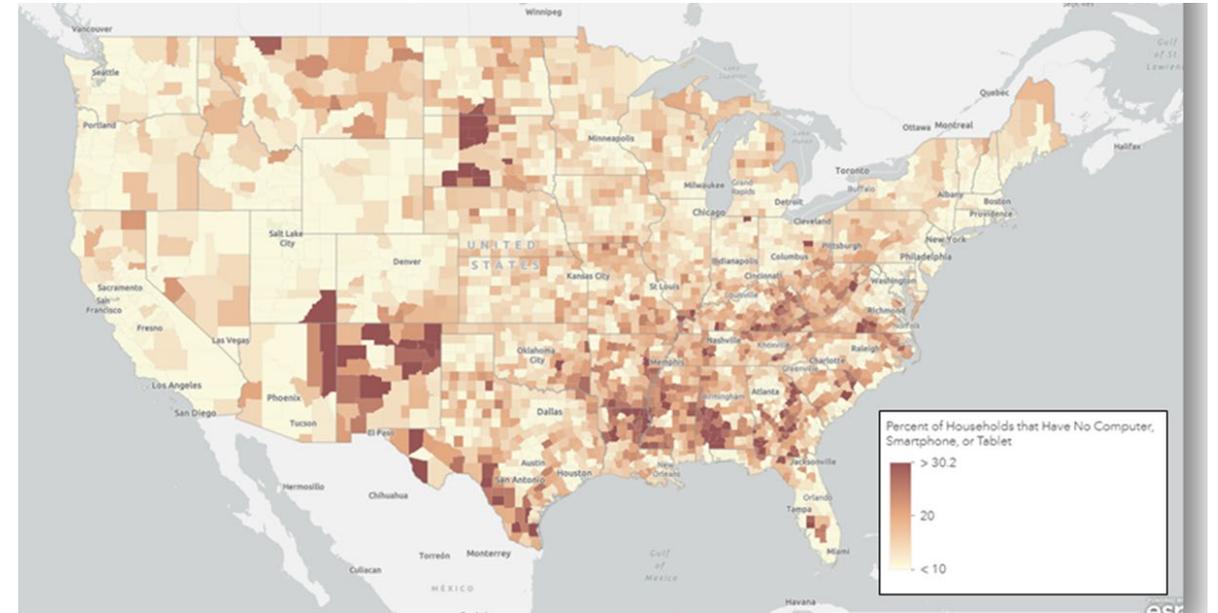
Red areas indicate where wireline broadband service is unavailable at the basic FCC benchmark speed of 25/3 Mbps based on FCC Form 477 carrier-reported data.

Visualization: NTIA National Broadband Availability Map (NBAM)

Source: FCC 2021 Broadband Deployment Report, based on ISP-reported Form 477 data

# It's Time to Invest in the American Workforce

- **77% of all jobs** require at least some technology skills.
- **48% of hiring managers** say that candidates lack the skills needed to fill open jobs.
- **29% of students without basic digital skills** say they won't consider post-secondary studies.
- **More than 12 millions households** lack access to a computer, tablet or smartphone.



Residents without devices have fewer opportunities to hone their digital skills, access educational opportunities, and advance in the workforce.

Visualization: NTIA National Broadband Availability Map (NBAM)

Source: American Community Survey Device Ownership data 2015-2019

# Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021

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## Broadband Infrastructure Deployment Grant:

- Competitive grant program open for application
- \$288 Million; awards expected to range \$5-30 Million
- Covered Partnerships
- Competitively and technologically neutral projects for the deployment of fixed broadband service in a census block with at least one household or business that does not have access to 25/3.

*[\\*Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021](#)*



**Jennifer Duane**

*Director of Grants*

*Office of Telecommunications and Information Applications, NTIA*

# Broadband Infrastructure Program



# Broadband Infrastructure Program Overview

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**\$288  
Million**



**Covered  
Partnerships**



**Covered  
Broadband  
Projects**



**Accepting  
Applications  
Through  
August 17, 2021**

# Key Definitions: Qualifying Broadband Service

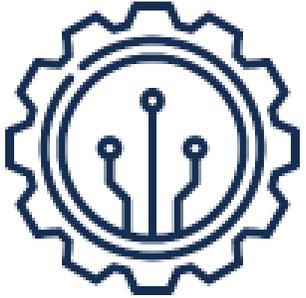
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- A download speed of not less than 25 Mbps;
- An upload speed of not less than 3 Mbps;
  - *The ability to deliver 25/3 simultaneously to every household in the eligible service area*
- Latency sufficient to support real-time, interactive applications.
  - *Defined as 95% or more of all peak period measurements of network round-trip latency (i.e., between customer premises and the closest Internet core peering interconnection point) are at or below 100 ms*

# Key Definitions: Unserved

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- Household lacking access to qualifying broadband service; and
- No broadband provider has been selected to receive, or is otherwise receiving, Federal or State funding subject to enforceable build out commitments to deploy qualifying broadband service in the specific area where the household is located.
- Eligible service area means a census block in which broadband service is not available at one or more households or businesses in the census block.

# Eligibility

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To be eligible for a grant under the Broadband Infrastructure Program, the covered partnership must submit an application that describes the following:



Covered  
Partnership



Covered  
Broadband  
Project



Proposed  
Service  
Area



Other  
Federal &  
State  
Support

## Notes:

- Each Covered Partnership may submit only one application for this grant program.
- A Covered Partnership may include more than one provider of fixed broadband services in its application.
- A provider of fixed broadband services may participate in more than one Covered Partnership.

# Funding Priorities

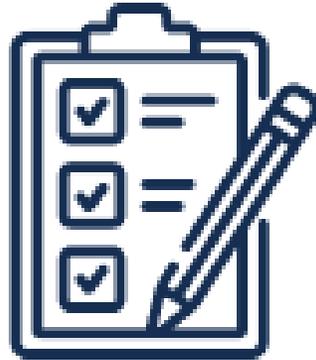
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Section 905(d)(4) of the Act stipulates that the Assistant Secretary will give priority, in decreasing order, for:

- ✓ Projects designed to provide broadband service to the greatest number of households in an eligible service area.
- ✓ Projects designed to provide broadband service in an eligible service area that is wholly within any area **other than** (1) a county, city, or town with more than 50,000 inhabitants and (2) the urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to a city or town of more than 50,000 inhabitants.
- ✓ Projects that are most cost-effective, prioritizing such projects in areas that are the most rural.
- ✓ Projects designed to provide broadband service with a download speed of at least 100 Mbps and an upload speed of at least 20 Mbps.
- ✓ Any other covered broadband project that meets the requirements of this NOFO.

# Deadlines & Extensions

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The covered partnership must expend the grant funds within one year after receipt.

- The Assistant Secretary may grant an extension for broadband construction projects.
- To qualify for an extension, the covered partnership must certify that: it has a plan for use of the funds; the construction project is underway; or extenuating circumstances require an extension to ensure project completion.

# Anticipated Funding Amounts & Cost Sharing

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- NTIA expects to make awards under this program within the following funding range: \$5,000,000 to \$30,000,000.



Up to  
\$288,000,000  
will be made  
available in total  
grant funds.



Matching funds  
will not be  
required, but  
preference given  
to projects with  
at least 10%  
match.

# Application

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dun & bradstreet



# Application Package

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The application package for the Broadband Infrastructure Program will consist of the following documents, among others:

- **Standard Form 424** – Application for Federal Assistance
- **Standard Form 424C** – Budget Information for Construction Programs
- **Standard Form 424D** – Assurances for Construction Programs
- **CD-511** – Certification Regarding Lobbying
- **Standard Form LLL** – Disclosure of Lobbying Activities
- **Project Narrative** – word document of not more than 20 single-spaced (40 double-spaced) pages responsive to the program description, statutory purposes, and funding priorities; identifying specific tasks, measurable milestones and performance outcomes
- **Budget Narrative and Detailed Budget Justification**
- **Indirect Cost Rate Agreement** (as applicable)

# Key Application Dates

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- Complete applications must be received by [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) no later than 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time on **August 17, 2021**.
- NTIA expects to complete its review, selection of successful applicants, and award processing by **November 15, 2021**.

# Funding Uses

## Eligible Uses

A covered partnership may use grant funds to fund:

- i. The costs of construction, improvement, and/or acquisition of facilities and equipment required to provide qualifying broadband service, including infrastructure for backhaul, middle and last mile networks;
- ii. The cost of long-term leases (for terms greater than one year) of facilities required to provide qualifying broadband service, including indefeasible right-of-use (IRU) agreements;
- iii. Cost of engineering design, permitting and work related to environmental, historical and cultural reviews;
- iv. Personnel costs, including salaries and fringe benefits for staff and consultants required for the implementation of the Broadband Infrastructure Program (such as project managers, program directors, subject matter experts, grant administrators, financial analysts, accountants, and attorneys);
- v. Reasonable pre-application expenses or grant preparation costs in an amount not to exceed \$50,000.
- vi. Other allowable costs necessary to carrying out programmatic activities of an award, not to include ineligible costs.

# Funding Uses

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## Ineligible Costs

The following restrictions apply to all members of a Covered Partnership:

- i. A Covered Partnership may not use grant funds received under this program to purchase or support any covered communications equipment or service as defined in section 9 of the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act of 2019 (47 U.S.C. 1608).
- ii. A profit, fee, or other incremental charge above actual cost is not an allowable cost under this program.
- iii. A Covered Partnership may not use grant funds, directly or indirectly, to support or oppose collective bargaining.

The provider of broadband service that is part of a Covered Partnership receiving the grant may not use grant funds to:

- i. Repay or make any other payment related to a loan made by any public or private lender; or
- ii. Use as collateral for a loan made by any public or private lender; or
- iii. Use more than \$50,000 of the grant amounts to pay for the preparation of the grant; and
- iv. Pay for previously incurred administrative costs or previously purchased equipment or construction activities undertaken prior to the award.
- v. Pay for the cost of providing broadband service to any locations that are used to meet an FCC Universal Service Fund (USF) deployment obligation.

# Compliance with Environmental and Historic Preservation Requirements

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Applicants with projects containing construction and/or ground disturbing activities must:

- Submit all required environmental documentation with their application package; and
- Obtain all required federal, tribal, state, and local governmental permits and approvals.

Applications must contain sufficient information to allow for NEPA analysis.

Funds may be withheld under a specific award condition until the Awardee submits additional environmental compliance information to assess the environmental impact of the project.

# Evaluation Criteria

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## Project Purpose and Benefits: 30 points

- Level of Impact in the Proposed Service Area
- Affordability of Services Offered

## Project Budget and Sustainability: 30 points

- Reasonableness of the Budget
- Sustainability of the Project
- Leverage of Non-Federal Resources

## Project Viability: 40 points

- Technical Approach and Related Network Capacity and Performance
- Applicant's Organizational Capability

# Review Process for the Broadband Infrastructure Program

## Initial Administrative and Eligibility Review of Complete Application Packets

- Greatest number of households
- To the extent funding remains available, continue priority sequencing



Merit Review – Applications satisfying the Initial Review will be evaluated by at least two objective reviewers who have demonstrated expertise in the programmatic elements of the grant program

- Scored independently based on NOFO Evaluation Criteria on a scale of 0-100
- Applications meeting NTIA scoring thresholds will advance to Programmatic Review - (70-100 points)



Programmatic Review – NTIA will prioritize its review of applications that qualified for funding during Merit Review based on the funding priorities outlined in the NOFO

- NTIA will use available data from FCC Form 477 for validation of proposed service areas as eligible
- NTIA will leverage other datasets available in NBAM to target funding to unserved areas

# Selection Factors and Selection Process

1. Scores and technical comments of the objective expert reviewers during Merit Review;
2. The analysis of NTIA Program Staff during Programmatic Review;
3. Satisfaction of the Broadband Infrastructure Program priorities set forth in Section 905(d)(4) of the Act;
4. The extent to which the applicant proposes to contribute non-federal cost share to fund a portion of the total eligible costs of the project;
5. The equitable geographic distribution of the proposed grant awards;
6. The extent to which the infrastructure investment is necessary to provide qualifying broadband service in the proposed service area and is unlikely to be made using private sources of funds;
7. Whether the applicant proposes to incorporate strong labor protections, including paying prevailing wages;
8. Avoidance of duplication with the initiatives of other federal agencies, including Department of Agriculture loan and grant programs for broadband services, applicable universal service programs authorized by the Federal Communications Commission; and
9. The availability of funds.

# Award Administration Information

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- Federal Award Notices
- Notification to Unsuccessful Applicants
- Retention of Unsuccessful Applications
- Administrative and National Policy Requirements
  - Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements
  - Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms & Conditions
  - Pre-Award Notification
  - Environmental and National Historical Preservation Requirements
  - Property Trust Relationship and Public Notice
  - Open Network Requirements
  - Domestic Preference for Procurements
  - Contracting with Small and Minority Businesses, Women's Business Enterprises, and Labor Surplus Area Firms
- Reporting

# Call for Merit Reviewers

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Merit reviews will start in August and extend into October. We are committed to ensuring that reviewers come from diverse backgrounds and areas of the United States.

To volunteer as a reviewer, please email a resume containing the information below to [grantreviewer@ntia.gov](mailto:grantreviewer@ntia.gov):

- Name
- Residence (city and state)
- Email/phone number
- Employer(s) including states you were employed in
- Position/Title
- Years and types of experience and positions in fields related to broadband activities

*Although you will not be compensated for your time and expertise, you will be making a significant contribution to enhancing broadband services and utilization throughout the United States. We appreciate the valuable contribution you will be making to the success of the programs and look forward to working with you as a reviewer.*

**Q & A**

# Join again for the grants webinar series!

Broadband Infrastructure Program	Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program	Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program
April 28 & 29	April 21 & 22	May 5 & 6
May 12 & 13	May 19 & 20	May 26 & 27
June 9 & 10	June 16 & 17	June 23 & 24
July 14 & 15	July 21 & 22	July 28 & 29

**Webinars start at 2:30 pm ET**

Registration is required for each webinar and is limited to 1,000

[BroadbandUSA Latest Events](#)

# Thank you for attending

The slides, transcript, and a recording will be posted on the BroadbandUSA website by June 16.

[BroadbandUSA Past Events](#)



[broadbandusa@ntia.doc.gov](mailto:broadbandusa@ntia.doc.gov)