

IJA Broadband Programs Pre-NOFO Technical Assistance Webinar #2
Moderator: Gilbert Resendez
March 23, 2022

Gilbert Resendez

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Hello, and welcome to today's NTIA pre-NOFO technical assistance webinar. Today's topic will be stakeholder engagement overview in preparation for the infrastructure investment in jobs act broadband programs, which are authorized to NTIA. Today we have a pretty full agenda, but first I want to introduce myself, my name is Gilbert Resendez. I'm a broadband program specialist here with NTIA in the office with Internet connectivity and growth, and I will be your host and moderator for today.

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First, we are going to have welcoming remarks from Andy Burke, who is NTIA Special Representative for broadband next we'll do an engagement and partnerships overview before transitioning to questions and answers which will be moderated by myself. So without further ado, I would like to introduce Andy Burke. Andy served as the Mayor of Chattanooga Tennessee from 2013 to 2020. Under his leadership Chattanooga established several digital equity programs, including Tech Goes Home, which offer technology training skills and access to families. At the end of his term Mayor Berke lead a partnership to provide high speed broadband at no cost to every family on free and reduced lunch making Chattanooga the first community and in the country was such a benefit. As a native of Chattanooga Major Burke's third in the Tennessee senate for five years prior to his being mayor. Please join me in welcoming Andy Burke.

Andy Berke

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Thanks, Gilbert. We appreciate each and every one of you for joining today's webinar. This is a transformational moment in the history of the web, The President of the United States has made a commitment that every American will have access to affordable, reliable broadband and a bipartisan group of legislators and Congress have made sure that it's funded and it's going to happen. I am so excited to be working in this area, something that I have been talking about working on for a long time and now we're seeing it come to fruition. NTIA has a talented group of people you're going to see some of them today in the webinar but in the long run the implementation, where the fiber meets the trenches is in the States and cities across this country. You're the ones who are going to make this happen. We know that people are talking about engagement and stakeholders, how we get this done around the country. I know that because I've been out on the road not just here in discussions with people about the policies, but also talking to state leaders, local leaders, people in nonprofits. I come from that background and that's what I've been hearing about. We are so appreciative of your diligence of your advocacy of the work that you've already put in and are only going to accelerate as these things move forward. We've got broadband equity access and deployment program we've got digital equity funds all those pieces will come together in your city, your

town, in your village, or state. Thank you so much for being here today and have a great webinar. Thank you very much.

Gilbert Resendez

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Now we will transition to the main part of our webinar engagements and partnerships overview. I first like to take a chance to have this chance to introduce my colleagues again, my name is Gilbert Resendez and I'm a broadband program specialist here at NTIA. I'm also joined today by my colleague Julia Pulidini who is also broadband program specialist in the office of NTIA focusing on local outreach and engagement. And I also like to introduce my colleague Michell Morton broadband program specialist focusing on digital equity issues in the office of Internet connectivity and growth here at NTIA. Before we get started, I want to go over one housekeeping item what today's webinar is what today's webinar is not. First I'd like to say, there are a lot of variations and state and local contacts and stakeholder engagement can and should vary depending on that contacts. We suggest, in addition to this webinar you engage with other states matter localities to learn more about what works for them. This webinar is stakeholder engagement, thought starters, and tips for states and localities this webinar is not and should not be misconstrued to be guidance on average requirements that will be included and big at the Opera notices of funding opportunities.

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Before we get started, I would like to give an overview of the money that NTIA will be administering. NTIA will be administering about \$48 billion in new broadband funding programs created by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Those are broken down as follows, first we have the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program which is \$42.45 billion state and territory formula program to close the availability gap as Congress found it in the legislation.

The next set of programs are all found under the Digital Equity Act, which is a \$2.75 billion dollar pot of funding which establishes a State planning grant program a State capacity grant program and competitive grant programs, to support the closure of the digital divide and promote digital equity and inclusion, so that Americans can fully participate in society and economy. The next program is a \$1 billion Middle Mile Program called the Enabling Middle Mile Infrastructure Broadband Program. It is direct competitive grants on a technology neutral basis to encourage the expansion and extension of Middle Mile infrastructure. And the final, but not least, program and this \$40 billion is the \$2 billion Tribal Broadband Connectivity Technical Amendments. These are grants to eligible entities with approved applications this piece of legislation provides new funds and extensive expenditure deadline for NTIA's current Travel Broadband Connectivity Program. Well next, I would like to give us an overview of the State focus during the first six to 12 months of the post NOFO and what will likely be broadband plan development. It's important to first note that the steps that we've laid out here are not a linear flow through these activities and these will have to move back and forth along the sample state

activities, these are sample state activities, depending on where they're at in their process. Examples of the State activities may include drafting letters of intent or a letter of intent for the BEAD Program. Creating an application for the planning grant entered the Digital Equity Act Plan development for both the plans required in the BEAD and DEA programs. Plans socialization and approval and again, these are these will more than likely be fluid and are not linear by any means. States will then move to the sub granting process program implementation evaluation and monitoring process in addition to their ongoing broadband efforts. Additionally today's focus on the potential stakeholder engagement activities and considerations to do before and during broadband plan development. Finally, I would like to give an overview of stakeholder engagement, but it's both required by the IJA statute and key to program success. The IJA or again infrastructure investment in jobs act introduced minimum collaboration requirements, for example, and under the BEAD Program five your action plans shall inform or legislation, states that those action plans shall be informed by collaboration with local and regional entities. Additionally, the initial and final proposals of the BEAD programs that should include a description or shall include a description of coordination with local governments, along with other local regional planning purposes. The DEA program also has similar specific requirements such as including description of how the state plans to collaborate with key stakeholders, which includes localities. And then, a list of organizations which the state's administrator entity is collaborating with to develop and deploy these plans or implement these plans. Until NTIA releases our notice with funding notices the funding opportunities these statutory mandates are the minimum program requirements and that's an important thing to note here.

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Additionally, we want to point out that there are several benefits from local stakeholder engagement. First it opens a dialog to better identify and understand community needs and how to prioritize. Next, it allows to tap into diverse expertise within the communities across your states. It also builds early buy in for your broadband plan and fosters joint ownership of your mission through partnerships. It also improves transparency which can build trust by demonstrating responsible stewardship of resources and energized stakeholders. So without further ado I'm going to pass it over to my colleague Julia Pulidindi.

Julia Pulidindi

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Thanks Gilbert so this presentation will focus on stakeholder engagement and what we aim to do is to provide some suggestions or tips that will help state and local governments, as they prepare to engage with stakeholders in the development of their state broadband plans. The three critical components of engagement, planning your strategy, tailoring your approach to various stakeholders, and that initial engagement with them. I'll be focusing on planning your strategy which includes identifying who you'll engage with determining how states and localities will work together on this. I'll also talk

about engagement processes and relationships that currently exist, that you can leverage for this broadband effort identifying will be responsible for engagement and managing capacity for it and tracking the impact of your engagement. One of the most important factors of your engagement will be to ensure that you have a large and diverse stakeholder group. We've defined a stakeholder as an individual group or organization that's involved in impacted by or simply interested in state mobile broadband efforts. Having this large and diverse engagement will ensure that states and localities are developing a broadband plan that's inclusive, ambitious, and truly responsive to the needs of the Community. We've grouped the common types of stakeholders you'll engage with into three buckets first one is public sector, which will include the federal government, state agencies or departments, like housing or transportation federal, state, and local elected officials counties cities and other political subdivisions of the State, tribal governments, and public utility commissions.

Private sector stakeholders will include service providers, economic development, organizations and chambers of commerce and local businesses. And finally, Community organizations will include nonprofit organizations, Community anchor institutions, such as health care facilities, libraries and academic institutions, community based organizations, coalition's and associations, Community activists, residents, community leaders and faith based organizations. Important to note that each community is unique, and you may have other key entities that you'll want to include in your broadband conversations. So state and local governments will each have distinct responsibilities on stakeholder engagement, but they can find ways for their work to dovetail with each other. Legislation calls on States to coordinate with locality so it's likely that they'll be the primary drivers of the development of statewide broadband plans either by developing it themselves in conjunction with that local coordination or by identifying and administering off the entity, who create an execute the plan. Localities being the closest level of government to the Community will be key in determining and understanding unique local needs and priorities, as well as having a knowledge of current broadband projects. They'll also be a resource for states in ensuring underrepresented populations are engaged and for communicating these local insights back to the States. While states and localities have sync roles and responsibilities, there are areas where they can inform each other. For example, they might find it helpful to collaborate on identifying existing engagement processes and mechanisms. They can also discuss defining engagement roles and who will take the lead on what so that they can maximize efficiency and reach, to ensure that underrepresented populations are heard. They can also coordinate on resources and information collection so that there's a feedback mechanism between state and local governments. And finally, they can share and leverage existing state local and regional resources such as local broadband plans or mapping efforts they can help connect communities who are already doing this work on broadband to those that are looking for guidance on how to start.

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One example of where States and local governments will work together is in identifying community needs. Localities again, because of their proximity to the Community can collect this information through whatever mechanism they've determined that works for them, whether it's by mapping surveys or Community town halls and then communicate that to the states. On the other hand, will take it from there by collecting and logging this information, so that it can be integrated into their state development plan and implementation. Another area of collaboration and support will be in technical assistance. Stakeholder engagement will be a big lift so localities will need to review internal capacity and needs, and states can help build technical assistance plans and guidance for localities based on these needs. State and local governments are not new to the engagement game, this is something that they've been working on for years, maybe not on broadband, but to address other pressing community needs. So it's important to look at existing processes to see how you can leverage those. This means looking at how existing partners and stakeholders are engaged what mechanisms are used for that engagement and how you develop topics of conversation for your stakeholder groups. Finally, it's also important to determine how often you engage them. might be helpful to look at other state or local departments, who oversee engagement like your departments have helped or transportation at the State level or your planning department at the local level to see how the community at large is currently engaged and how you can modify those processes for your broadband discussions. Another area of work, you may already have expertise on is ensuring a wide and broad representation of stakeholders. This means making sure you have a broad geographic coverage of your community a diverse group of stakeholders, you're, including the unserved and underserved communities so underrepresented groups and covered populations, as defined by the Digital Equity Act. Next look at the stakeholders and partners currently engaged and if they may have expertise in some of the discussions that may come up during your broadband planning.

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For example, some of these groups might have technical expertise and broadband planning or mapping or community building that might be useful for you to leverage. Understanding and identifying stakeholders that will have the greatest impact in developing your broadband plans will make sure that you have the right people at the table for this. And finally, planning ahead for engagement will need to embark looking at any potential obstacles or challenges that may come up. So look to what you've done previously that's been successful in your state or localities to see what worked what didn't and how you troubleshooted any unforeseen issues that came up along the way. It's important for states and localities to determine what kind of staffing will be needed, and if this is something that will be added to existing staffs responsibilities or if a new role will be created if it's a new role you'll need to determine where this position will set who they'll report to and the skill set needed to effectively engage with stakeholders. And if this is something that will be added to an existing staff persons responsibilities it'll be important to be

aware of how much of a time commitment this will be for them to ensure that it doesn't conflict or get in the way of other tasks that they might have. Other areas of capacity that will need to be determined, is how you plan to engage your stakeholders and the resources, you need for that time and cost wise. Webinars and other virtual engagements may be easier and faster facilitate but may involve a technology investment to ensure, you have the right platform to effectively engage everyone. In person meetings on the other hand, will get you that face to face contact that can lead to more collaborative conversations, but can require more staff time and logistical planning. And finally tracking the impact of your engagement. It's important to determine early on in the process, what successful engagement will look like, for your state and locality, and to develop metrics for that. Tracking your metrics during your engagement from the beginning, can ensure a long-term sustainability of your broadband planning efforts. Creating some qualitative and quantitative metrics will help you track your engagement. These can take the form of contact list which are not only crucial for that initial engagement, but also for continued communication with your stakeholders. You can also determine what engagement mechanisms work best. You might find yourself needing to try a few strategies before identifying the one that works best for your unique group of stakeholders. And finally, for local governments, ensure that stakeholder comments and feedback are shared with the State. And for the States it's important to make sure that these are incorporated into your broadband plans. Important to note that these are not going to be one-time conversations you have with your stakeholders. So the more states and localities can empower them to contribute and feel like their feedback will shape broadband planning efforts, the more continued and sustained engagement you'll have from them. And with that I'll pass it off to my colleague, Michell Morton about how to tailor your approach to various stakeholders, thank you.

Michell Morton

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Thank you, Julia. These next slides and we're going to focus on tailoring your approach. Specifically, how can local governments, develop approaches and messaging to engage with various stakeholder communities. As a reminder, these are some best practices or recommendations, you can use to develop your strategy is to engage with Community based organizations and Community members. As locality start the engagement process, think about the following best practices. Invest early to develop strong relationships with Community based organizations first think about who your stakeholders. As you begin to consider and identify your target groups start by conducting outreach and developing working relationships. Consider informing Community stakeholders about existing work or planned activities and projects. Building these relationships early on, be helpful in developing trust and co-building a shared vision. For example, some localities are working with CBOs to develop surveys and feasibility studies. Transparency is also critical as localities engage with CBOs. Communicating early and often builds trust and reinforces the importance of co-building process. Provide clear guidance on how information will be shared and received, for example, is locality.

Maci Morin

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We hope you can hear me this is Maci Morin and from the production side. So sorry that we are having video and audio issues we're going to give it another minute and if for whatever reason, that doesn't work we'll go ahead and have our moderator Gilbert Resendez hop on and Julia Pulidindi who is one of our speakers, and we will have them start answering questions for you. And hope we can get the rest of it going but definitely don't want to keep you waiting. Your time is precious to us so apologize again for these technical difficulties. Sometimes that's just the way it goes and times of COVID so thanks again for your patience we really appreciate it. I'll just hopping on one more time just to let you know that we are trying to get the video back up because I know that's what you're all here, for, if not, we will definitely make the full recording available to you all. Afterwards, that we will watch the full presentation, as well as taking a part of our Q & A. We are trying to load it up here and hopefully it'll work so keep your fingers crossed thanks.

Michell Morton

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upon efficiencies increase capacity and identify areas of expertise needed to develop the plan. States and localities may not have all the resources needed at this time, but stakeholder engagement offers opportunities to develop those resources and capacities from the stakeholder community. Which can include conducting outreach advocacy launching projects and initiatives and finding experts were capacities limited. In this slide you'll find helpful questions to ask yourself as you begin this process. Keep in mind that communicating a clear purpose for your stakeholder engagement will help you decide the best engagement approaches and activities. As noted in the previous slide deciding the best engagement approach and activity is essential. States and localities can foster broad participation and awareness by using multiple approaches. This slide is a great example. Strategies to stimulate participation and build awareness. This is what I would call the four c's of engagement communication, consultation, coordination and collaboration. Each of these, shows the impact and level of effort from low touch to high touch. Consultation is a low touch approach, with the goal of direct and targeted outreach to stakeholders to gather input. That can be achieved in a variety of methods from town halls door knocking campaigns to focus groups. This is best suited for collecting input on a specific ask and can help create buy in from stakeholders to feel heard and prioritize. The collaboration approach is a high touch level of engagement, it requires working alongside with stakeholders to help share in decision planning, decision making, and failures. This type of effort is mostly common as the most common tactic and forming working groups to help in development of socialization of the plan. This engagement approach is best suited for more complex issues that impact various groups and help create a feeling of ownership and responsibility. As you decide your engagement approaches, ensure that accessibility inclusive at are at the forefront, consider the cultural competency of your approaches and tactics. Where applicable is literature written in multiple languages? Have you considered accessibility issues? Have

you considered various types of communication channels best suited for the targeted audience phone calls, text campaigns, virtual or in person conversations? Keep in mind that state and local governments will address the same topics will have different ways of engaging on them with their stakeholders. This slide shows examples of how some states and localities are implementing various engagement approaches. In Louisiana Connect LA uses monthly newsletters to keep stakeholders aware of its progress events blogs and shared links to press articles on the initiative. A newsletter is featured on the Connect LA website and email to subscribers, this is a great example of a low touch approach that keeps stakeholders informed and engaged. In Detroit Connect 311 uses of the consultation approach together direct input and data from the stakeholder community about their insights, knowledge challenges, and needs. The connect 311 team focused on both short term and long term needs of Community Members such as distributing hotspots to help underserved residence gain at home, Internet access, but also contained to focus on long term needs of building a sufficient infrastructure to meet the increasing demand affordable and sustainable connectivity. Oakland Undivided used the collaboration approach to create a multi partner coalition of stakeholders, which included the city of Oakland. Oakland unified school district and multiple CBOs to address connectivity issues brought on by the pandemic. Through its efforts Oakland undivided created a tech check survey to assess the and collect accurate information about the techniques of the students in their households. In doing so, this allowed the Oakland Undivided team to target efforts and resources to address the needs of low-income students. Last and Minnesota the governor's Task Force has used a higher touch approach to co-develop its vision for broadband connectivity with CBOs and providers. Members meet monthly and distribute annual report, the task force serves as a bridge between coalition's in other broadband efforts across the state. Because this approach requires a higher level and more sustain level of engagement, all stakeholders have ownership and more fully in that are more fully invested in achieving the goals in the plan. Keep in mind approaches will vary and change over time and will shift, as a result of the changing goals objectives and activities. Here are some examples of topics to address to stakeholders on building a foundation and moving towards success. Start with an assessment of the current state to gain a better understanding of needs, current efforts and projects, learn of untapped opportunities and assess the gaps in priorities. As you begin to identify the barriers or roadblocks also asked about who else should be included in the discussions? See this as an opportunity to provide technical assistance in education, if needed, on topics like broadband, or digital equity, or mapping. Next incorporate opportunities for your stakeholders provide feedback during the pre-planning process and throughout the planning process solicited their feedback to keep them abreast of your progress and to gain additional insight or identify other opportunities or barriers not previously identified. This is an iterative process that should be transparent, improve relevancy, and maintain buy in from stakeholders. Begin to problem solve and brainstorm together by defining what success is and creating solutions together. Last sheer call to action. Leverage your conversations about your programs, to create a call to action about broadband.

Finding ways to collaborate on programs, like the affordable connectivity program or providing support by to ongoing American rescue plan at projects will build stronger relationships and help you start the planning process for IIAA been sooner. This last slide is a great illustration, for both States and localities on activities by engagement topic. You can use these examples activities as a starting place, for example, to assess the current state. States can coordinate with agencies and umbrella organizations that are producing and updating maps on current service maps. Localities can offer technical assistance to CBOs and how to improve broadband readiness across communities. As a suggestion states and localities should reach out to stakeholders to ask what topics they would like to be involved in and ask where they can be most helpful. Seeking the advice and guidance from stakeholders can be helpful, even in the early stages are trying to figure out who to reach out to and how. Now I'll turn it back over to get with.

Gilbert Resendez

Thank you very much, Michelle. And right now, we're about to head into our Q & A section, but before we do, I just have some last next steps that I want to go over. First, as a reminder stakeholder engagement is an ongoing process that during the life cycle of a project. Especially these broadband projects, they build trust and collaboration with stakeholders and engagement can't be episodic it should be an ongoing process. As broadband plans mature the objectives of stapler engagements may change as you learn more information, but you should continue, we include that stakeholder thought. Input throughout the campaign process. For further guidance we have access to additional and 10 materials on our website and they can be found on our state and local government page. And without further ado This concludes our content piece of our webinar and we will now move over to the Q @ A section.

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Alright well Thank you everyone and be again we apologize for some of the technical difficulties that we have there in the middle in our and our team is working to make sure that those are results so when the recordings posted to the website that you will be able to hear the full recording on the website, and I do want to then go ahead and begin our Q&A section.

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The first question that I see here for Julia and myself is: What should States be doing now to get ready to engage with locality? And Julie if that's okay with you I'll go ahead and take that one because I tend to work with more of our stakeholders. What they can do now, in order to begin that stakeholder outreach and getting prepared to engage with locality, is beginning do an inventory of who are your municipal leaders in your space who go in leadership and who are the where the county association and who leads the county association. We do those organizations have brought them in person or persons who have broadband at the part of their portfolio begin making that list of who you can begin a meeting with Julie, if you have anything else to add from a local perspective.

Julia Pulidindi

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No, I think that is the most critical thing for States I you know there's so many local governments out there and I think, making sure state governments on state broadband offices are connected to those state municipal and counties is probably a good one stop shop or first step, you sure you're connecting with localities.

Gilbert Resendez

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Yeah. I agree. I'm kind of on the flip side, the next question that I see in the Q&A is what question localities that need to be doing now to get ready to cut the funding.

Julia Pulidindi

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So I actually have one big thing locality should be doing there a lot of things you all could be doing, but I think the most important thing is reaching out to your state broadband offices. Most of this money will be flowing through the states, and you know as we discuss local coordination is required by the legislation of states, so I know states are going to be doing hard to reach out to localities but you will need to do your part to reach out to the states if. If you don't know who your state broadband contact is, you can find that on the NTIA website under state local government page. You can find the state broadband leaders network, and you can find who your state broadband contact is. If you're not comfortable doing that, please reach out to broadbandforall.gov and we're happy to connect you, with your state broadband offices. And If you're not comfortable doing that reach out again to your state county municipal associations, because they may already have those relationships with them.

Gilbert Resendez

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Yeah. That's great. I think all we want to take a chance to bug leaders network that's the cohort that I helped support or NTIA like Julia said those contacts, the contact information for those the problem, people have coordinators directors managers are on the website and I'm always more than happy to make introductions as well as folks. The next question in our queue is: How do I start a conversation about broadband in my city, County locality?

Julia Pulidindi

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So you know, I think local governments vary across the board. I'm going to list a couple city departments that we're hearing. That are from you know people that we work with that are doing work right now, but your local government CIO or CTO office be working on this. There some communities that are doing broadband mapping efforts through their CIO or CTO office so that's one good place to start. Another good place to start might be your planning department, I used to work for a local government and the planning department. I facilitated Community meetings on a monthly basis on various issues, most likely most commonly zoning matters, but that could be one department in your particular community that already has an engagement process set with the committee that you can reach to your transportation Department of Transportation decisions go through a public comment process so that could be

another agency to work in. So, and the last one I want to mention is the school board that we've seen and you all on the call probably are aware of this, particularly in the pandemic. You know the students and households with school aged children that didn't have access to Internet were the hardest hit in the beginning, and the school boards and libraries and even healthcare institutions were doing a lot to make sure that those communities were connected, so I would also think about reaching out to them because not only do they have that direct line to the Community, they probably have had those conversations on a broadband availability already.

Gilbert Resendez

00:44:36.060 --> 00:44:36.330

Yeah. yeah because they should all be able to advocate. Let's see here the next question that I haven't asked you is: This webinar is great, thank you. But what are some other types of resources that NTIA providing to get States ready to ensure that we are working with all localities?

Julia Pulidindi

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So I'm right we're doing these webinars Gilbert had mentioned our state broadband leaders network, which we are heavily engaged with me and I should say it's defined the state broadband leaders network and for those of you who are not aware of it, it is a group of state broadband offices or departments in the state that are performing the function of broadband for that state, so we have regular conversations with them. We engage with them as often as we can. Whenever they have questions we tried to answer them and we also have regular convenings with them. So what you may not see through these public webinars is kind of happening on the back end, we are engaging with them frequently on some of the questions they have.

Gilbert Resendez

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Yeah. We do engage frequently about it by broadband leader network. We actually had a meeting yesterday. What are recommendations that we have for how to partner with county? This individual is a tower infrastructure, our infrastructure development company and they want to partner with county and the digital divide.

Julia Pulidindi

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So I'll just kind of answer this question generally. I you know if there's particular county you're looking to work with, I would you know look to see what kind of digital divide efforts they already have underway and maybe reach out there. If there has been a champion on the county Commission. You know they're obviously a person to reach out to. If you're generally looking for counties to work with again I would look at your state county associations, I don't mean to kind of sound like a broken record, but I have a feeling I'm going to be mentioning state county associations and state municipal associations, a lot, because they are truly a powerful force at the state level and I think it could be a good resource for you.

Gilbert Resendez

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Absolutely, I think, going that for a lot of these answers or a lot of these questions, I think, working, but you know you're speaking is fully your state county association. I think one thing that came across or hopefully came across is that partnerships and partnership development is the key to these outreach activities and a lot of those organizations have been a lot of work to developing those partnership and relationships. What are some guidelines or information that counties and or cities can start gathering now in order to attain everything needed to submit a letter of intent?

Julia Pulidindi

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So I'm just a little bit of a clarification there. States will actually be submitting letters of intent for the BEAD Program. So again, this is why it's so important for you to make sure you're connecting with your state broadband offices. In terms of data that would be useful to you know take when you're having these conversations is understanding who's unserved and underserved and community anchor institutions that don't have access to the gigabit connections in your communities. If you're able to take that information to your state broadband offices, I think that's a good way to start the conversation the BEAD Program priorities are those three populations, unserved, underserved, and anchor institutions without a gig connection. And then any kind of data or mapping efforts, you can again, the purpose of this legislation is to make sure everybody has access to affordable reliable Internet. So identifying those pockets of the communities where access is a challenge, and also affordability. That information will be crucial.

Gilbert Resendez

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Absolutely. Are there grants that small rural counties can apply for?

Julia Pulidindi

00:49:12.630 --> 00:49:26.670

So again, because a lot of this funding, most of the funding will be flowing through the States, you would be able to apply to the states for those funding, which again important to talk to your state broadband offices now about that. But there are also other programs where localities can apply directly for those funds, and those are the digital equity act competitive grant program which will open after the two other Digital Equity Grant Programs and then also the Middle Mile Infrastructure Program. Thank you.

Gilbert Resendez

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The next question, I see in our queue: How much will be given to develop a digital equity plans? Do we have that information right now?

Julia Pulidindi

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Yes. There is a total of \$60 million for States to apply for the planning piece of their digital equity plans and then, once that grant program finishes there will be the State Compact a Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program and there's \$1.44

billion sorry \$1.44 million available for that and that money is to be used for implementation of digital equity plans.

- Gilbert Resendez 00:50:40.530 --> 00:50:50.580
I have some of your questions, maybe questions are not able to answer at the moment at the end, by the way. I apologize I'm kind of work they'll pre NOFO for all of the programs. That you metropolitan planning organization their NPOs count as regional entities for any of our programming?
- Julia Pulidindi 00:50:59.490 --> 00:51:06.150
I actually saw this in the chat and I looked it up, I will talk to your state broadband Office about that, I believe that NPO's and regional council designations as a local or political jurisdiction of the state, I think, depends on your individual State code. I would you know have that conversation with your state broadband office and also your state transportation office for clarification on that.
- Gilbert Resendez 00:51:26.100 --> 00:51:33.600
Yeah. I think that, for I think it can be defined were political subdivisions that maybe I should get clarification from there. What are some key policy questions which you'd recommend that state take to local governments and other stakeholders for input not sure if we're able to provide data on that, but if we can?
- Julia Pulidindi 00:51:55.470 --> 00:52:03.540
Now so I'm not to put it to a future webinar, but we are going to be doing an upcoming webinar on where enabling conditions and these are some of the state and local policies that you can have in place that could expand or increase broadband expansion. Some of these are streamlining your permitting processes, dig once policies, asset retention policies, understanding asset management and how to go about doing that. Our webinar on that is coming up in a couple weeks will focus on that and we do understand implementing these policies, takes a huge effort at the local and state levels. So these are just some recommendations that we have some things that you'd want to think about but definitely tune in to our upcoming webinar for that.
- Gilbert Resendez 00:52:46.050 --> 00:52:46.260
Right. Lost my place one second. Will there be a required standard for Community engagement and the grant applications, or will it be a point system that helps besides preferable to have an application based on engagement activities?
- Julia Pulidindi 00:53:11.100 --> 00:53:12.090
Sorry, you want to go ahead.
- Gilbert Resendez 00:53:13.230 --> 00:53:18.570
Yeah. I think this will be something that we address and our notices of funding opportunities. So that's great question, I think. Not to punt it down the road, a

couple months but we'll have to wait to see what the notices exciting opportunities to find for that. I'm glad you're thinking on that along that line. Are private providers considered stakeholders for engagement, we talked a lot about mobile engagement here, but a question that came up in the chat about today?

Julia Pulidindi

00:53:50.340 --> 00:53:55.350

Yeah, I think, so I know we were missing, not including them under the private bucket on potential stakeholders, but I think they have expertise that they can bring to the table and knowledge that could be used, or you know the particular community that they service. So yes, I would consider them a stakeholder.

Gilbert Resendez

As an individual business looking to lead Can I take point and start paying them by start setting that up in my local? We should, I find the aim of working on it?

Julia Pulidindi

00:54:50.220 --> 00:54:54.660

I think sorry go ahead, I want to talk will be No go ahead, I think. I think you know we talked a lot about state and local governments, but the business community is going to be really critical in this conversation, but again state local governments can help you that anchor for the business community and other stakeholders, so I would recommend that you look at this the local or county government that you're in see if broadband is a topic of conversation amongst the local leaders or department heads there. If you want to email us at broadbandforall.gov. We're happy to you know, have a conversation with you to help you navigate who, in your community might be the best to speak to, but I think I would start with someone in your in your local government to begin this conversation.

Gilbert Resendez

00:55:45.300 --> 00:55:46.050

Yeah Thank you. The next question I've seen in our Q &A is: How can we tailor our approach for dealing with Tribal localities? I think we at NTIA with tribal communities and nations Tribal nations are crucial stakeholders, who are these programs and oftentimes, within an underserved communities. I think it's really important they are bringing in to think about those now. I think, making similarly to like you would do it understanding, who the leaders are in the community but also working with your space to identify where those tribal liaison number of states have tribal liaisons. Who can help connect to you became a conversation it's also important to recognize that we hadn't I have tribal team, whose job is to work on Tribal outreach coordination and nation to nation, dialogue and we're always happy to help facilitate conversations as well.

Gilbert Resendez

00:56:56.160 --> 00:57:03.210

The next question Is: Should we wait for the NOFO before reaching out to the State broadband office? I'm going to say no, you should really start having a conversation with your broadband office now it's going to be very crucial to reach out to your state province Office now have a conversation about what you're seeing in your local communities and how you can help provide that information data. That section partnership to make sure that you're speaking

put forward the best product possible to ensure the success of these either program.

Julia Pulidindi

00:57:31.680 --> 00:57:38.550

The only thing I would add, as soon as this webinars over go to our website find out your state contact is and just send them off a quick email. I just it's just so critical to start opening those lines of conversation with them, so the sooner the better.

Gilbert Resendez

00:57:50.250 --> 00:57:56.490

How do we include ISPs and local government and local engagement, given that individual organization may be doing now?

Julia Pulidindi

00:58:03.330 --> 00:58:10.860

I think for local governments, I think, however, you engage other service providers in your other you know non community stakeholders are not non community or mission stakeholders, I would recommend that as a starting point with bringing those service providers to the table. Again, I think, like everything is so critical everything needs to be done now, but I think that would be a good another good first step. I've given you so many first steps already, but I think that will be a good thing to do, as you're preparing to have these. Whereas as you're preparing for the funding to come that's another stakeholder group that you definitely want to have conversations with.

Gilbert Resendez

00:58:51.480 --> 00:58:51.930

I agree. We give any feedback at this time on how NOFO applications will work with the new broadband mapping system and gave a question that a scoping developed? and I believe that this question is referencing the FCC new mapping system that it's developing under the broadband data act and recently announced provider or contractors. And I'm happy to start. I do know that speaking specifically to BEAD Program applicants there is a prioritization mechanism of funding and serving the underserved community first and then moving to the underserved community and then community anchor institutions that gigabit service and this NTIA will leverage the SEC map. Please make sure that you're engaging with your space to work on their data collection as well, and our support for good applications as well.

01:00:23.880 --> 01:00:40.620

Here as related to the BEAD program: Is local engagement required participants, for example, couldn't not for profit cooperative electrical utility partner with an ISP with an approval by the State broadband office?

Julia Pulidindi

01:00:49.020 --> 01:00:51.870

I think I would defer to the NOFO on that. The NOFO will outline but, for whatever particular program I think you mentioned to BEAD program but that'll outline in more detail the eligible participants and how the funding can be a blend and how the eligible participant can apply for that funding.

Gilbert Resendez 01:01:20.160 --> 01:01:32.400
This person said, they are a minority small business that can scale broadband services through partner relationship with an outside vendor services does that helps streamline the process? Actually, not sure.

Julia Pulidindi 01:01:38.700 --> 01:01:39.000
I'm not sure either, but I heard you say partner, and I think that's another critical thing that we want to highlight. The states and localities and everybody, you know comes together to make sure. Everybody in their community has broadband access, the more you can highlight your partnerships. You know the like you said, the greater efficiencies that are there, the more collaboration that's there I think that's important, and I should also, you know flip around I know you know. We're giving you a lot of like high-level information, but at the end of the day, you all, are going to be doing the work. You are going to kind of see the successes and challenges and pitfalls, and I just want to remind everyone, please make sure to share those experiences with us because you're not the only one going through this and the more that we can. We know who's doing what and we can connect like communities with each other, the more successful everybody will be.

Gilbert Resendez 01:02:39.060 --> 01:02:53.280
And the next question I have for you Julia from the local side of the local governments: Can we NTIA speak to the content of community engagement as opposed to process and how to manage that engagement what feedback sure local government seek from that outreach? Sorry if I went frozen there for a second, I think, ironically connection is not the strongest that it should be.

Julia Pulidindi 01:03:08.760 --> 01:03:20.250
But I think your question Gilbert before you cut out was: What kind of conversation should local government be having with the community? I think the most important ones are do they have access. If they have access, are they subscribing to it, and why not it's an affordability issue is the cost of subscription to high do they not have the technology tools computers that kind of stuff, what are the barriers for using technology for people in your community? Again, is it the access or is it just the inability to take to get those resources they need.

Gilbert Resendez 01:03:55.500 --> 01:03:56.160
Thank you. To this date flash counties cities will apply for funding more programs before after or do they apply before after they released an RFP for bids on building to maintain the network this before, is the dollar amount on the application, how is the dollar amount on the application determined? I think you know truly it makes it a little bit like a broken record, but what I'm going to save this, you have to wait for the notice as an opportunity for those programs since we'll all have unique rules. And this may be a conversation, you have to have with those you know city county state, since I know a lot of them also have their own procurement rules and laws that they have to follow feel want to consult those entities as well, to make sure that you're. Following the NOFO

rules and guidelines for set for but also state and local laws around procurement for those attendees.

01:05:10.470 --> 01:05:20.520

This person is employed with the public health agency which provides free broadband wi-fi through a collaboration with the provider, as the ISP to its residents. How can these funds NTIA funds support what they're currently doing and have a place?

Julia Pulidindi

01:05:32.490 --> 01:05:36.060

I'm not sure. I'm sorry I don't have the answer to that question. I again I would talk to your safe broadband office. Gilbert correct me if I'm wrong. I don't know that any of these funds that will become available are to for projects for reimbursement. I think, therefore, new projects, but I love what you're doing so I hope you do reach out to us and, and you know share examples as project.

Gilbert Resendez

01:06:02.220 --> 01:06:09.150

Now, that may be something we'll have to direct to broadbandforall@ntia.gov and we can help connect you further on that. I think you're absolutely right. On the previous NTIA broadband meeting for the individual organization was told that open access network design for preferred should this organization recommend taking me to focus on open access project?

Julia Pulidindi

01:06:37.980 --> 01:06:46.620

I don't know the answer to that. I'm sorry but I if I want to email us at broadband, for we can look into that a little more detail.

Gilbert Resendez

01:07:12.420 --> 01:07:21.930

How is NTIA thinking about ensuring coordination in metropolitan regions that customer will state boundaries? For example, in Kansas City Missouri, and Kansas City Kansas, Washington DC where I live, crosses you know multiple jurisdictions, as well as you know, the New York in the tri state area.

Julia Pulidindi

01:07:34.260 --> 01:07:35.790

I think this is a good conversation again to have with your state broadband offices and your state county municipal associations, because as know there that are more intimately aware of and understand these issues and I'm sure it's on their radar, so I think they would be the they would be good people to talk to.

Gilbert Resendez

01:08:14.670 --> 01:08:17.190

Agreed. Is our local government currently has their involvement and broadband development they're very, very rural in Alaska but need for broadband is high. How can a small local municipal government, such as this one, that we've described the effective in the start of this process, or if you start this process?

Julia Pulidindi

01:08:43.410 --> 01:08:46.860

Then I'm going to beat this drum one more time talk to your state broadband office. I agree, again, the BEAD program priorities are connecting communities that don't have access, essentially so I hate to punt you to somebody else, but I think they're going to be your best bet in this, and again like just opening up those lines of communication as soon as you can.

Gilbert Resendez

01:09:08.850 --> 01:09:11.880

I know, but I would 100% ECHO, what Julia said.

01:09:13.440 --> 01:09:17.520

Those unconnected Community our community are the priority of the Program. And NTIA does have a relationship with them and I'm more than happy to make introductions. We're more than happy to I think those are the communities that we really want to prioritize to make sure you start the conversation with just early about the need and up the challenges to deployment in our country, are going to be key. Well NTIA have a list of state broadband offices once they are created be yes, we do maintain our state broadband office, I know that there are a number of states that don't have a problem in offices. In case currently doesn't for a person who's responsible for broadband in the state, so I know, while not every state has a formal office which you have somebody who is responsible for it. And I know that there are a number of states have legislation. My colleague, Catherine Bates and I do maintain those relationships are in constant communication coordination with the state. As we get that information we do our best that website on that page on the broadband USA website, you want to take a moment to address that question in the Q&A. But we are we do work to make sure that that information and made readily available. Happy make an introduction, but the contact the person Dev work on man come on for office.

Julia Pulidindi

01:11:06.930 --> 01:11:08.700

And I just saw something in the chat about certain states like Alaska not having a broadband office, and please know that Gilbert mentioned he and our other colleague Catherine Bates work very closely with step up and lead your network and part of their work is working with each State to ensure state broadband offices have what they need whatever division in the state who's doing broadband work so at NTIA there is awareness of you know what states will need to make sure they're able to implement these funds effectively so. Your point about Alaska not having a State broadband office is well, taken. And, and again if you are from a community in Alaska please, please make sure you're connected to us, so we can make sure to connect you to the right people once they're in place.

Gilbert Resendez

01:12:04.530 --> 01:12:18.960

Be here if we submitted a project or program for the previous broadband adoption and infrastructure NOFO? I believe they're referring to the private infrastructure program that we release some words for. Can we resubmit the

same package for this NOFO? We are currently we are in a very unique geographical area here on the North point of Alaska and we'll strategize how to get the appropriate broadband here. I think you know similar to a lot of questions I think there's going to be something or to wait for them to NOFO in our community for our programs. However, I would encourage you to reach out to myself and I'm happy to make an introduction with your Alaska point person, I believe, is true we have mentioned earlier that the letter of intent to apply for funds does have to come from the state, not a locality so we're happy to make introductions you can begin sharing. Your local priorities and meet with the state for their work for the best information possible. Okay, so this person, so that they are where the question may be for active window, but if they're approaching current stakeholders, for the tribal broadband connectivity application. They know that they will be asked. Will this new effort require a new application?

Julia Pulidindi

01:13:36.090 --> 01:13:40.080

Hey, I think you're right, I think that would be a question for Tribal connectivity.

Gilbert Resendez

01:13:40.740 --> 01:13:46.110

Yeah. I think that person's right. I think we're going to be a question mark upon pause for the appropriate notices of funding opportunities to be published to share. This this individual that all State to apply with and identify plan will be awarded funding to address digital equity correct? I think they may be referencing both the Planning and Capacity Building Program and Digital Equity Act.

Gilbert Resendez

01:14:37.530 --> 01:14:38.280

Yeah. So this individual Apps will comply with an identified plan be awarded funding to address the digital equity correct and I believe that they're referencing the State Planning and Capacity Building Programs in The Digital Equity Act.

Julia Pulidindi

01:15:04.380 --> 01:15:10.500

Like Gilbert had mentioned the Digital Equity Grant Program there they'll come out in three phases. The first one is the Planning Grant Program. The notice funding opportunity for that program will be out around mid-June, I believe. So that'll outline the application process for applying for funds for developing that State Digital Equity Plan and then, once that grant program has completed then we'll move on to The Capacity Grant Program and then there'll be additional funds available that you can apply for implementation of that plan that you've developed.

Gilbert Resendez

01:15:57.540 --> 01:16:05.100

What are some key policy questions which we which NTIA would recommend that they take to local governments and other stakeholders?

Julia Pulidindi

01:16:12.960 --> 01:16:14.430

I think that like I mentioned before we'll be doing a webinar on enabling conditions in a couple weeks, which can talk about some local policies that you may want to put in place to help increase broadband deployment, but I also think this could be a conversation that you have with your stakeholders. I mean like I said, and you know you all know this better than we do every community is unique and there may be other policy decisions outside of streamlining permitting processes or dig once policies that are unique to your community and your situation that you might find need to be put into place. So again, I think you might identify these, as you have your conversations with your stakeholders.

Gilbert Resendez

01:17:04.320 --> 01:17:05.070

Thank you, Julia. Is a funding requirement that the state and or local entity own the infrastructure deployed using BEAD funds if account as a county set up a public private partnership in the private company on the infrastructure but contractually be held responsible for delivering broadband Internet? I think again, this may be a question that we have to wait for notice as a funding opportunity it sounds like for either BEAD or the Middle Mile. But that's a great question I got thinking about that.

Julia Pulidindi

01:18:02.010 --> 01:18:10.590

Yeah and I think it also might also rely on the terms of the agreement that you have in place with them with your private partner.

Gilbert Resendez

01:18:12.240 --> 01:18:20.520

When do we estimate the data and data map, I believe, probably me to act map to the FCC is working on will be published? How long, would you estimate the validation process annotate asking, since some and service for unserved and underserved etc. is critical elements of funding? I do not have a timeline for windows, that will be published, what I can say that NTIA does have an Interagency coordinator, who works very extensively with the FCC and we're very aware that those maps are crucial to your programs, for we meet regularly are coordinating regularly with the SEC, in order to ensure that those maps, will be able to leverage that.

Julia Pulidindi

01:19:27.600 --> 01:19:29.970

Yeah. I would make sure that you know you all, are also connected to the FCC the FCC has an intergovernmental advisory committee that has state and local government representatives on that committee. They do a lot of work with state and local governments as well, so I would just make sure you're staying connected with the FCC they've provided a lot of resources on the development of their maps, including the challenge process. I think a lot of people are aware that states will be challenging the FCC maps when they do come out and I saw that they have a webinar on the FCC challenge process so you know, please make sure you're connected to the FCC and you know you're in the loop on what they're doing as well.

Gilbert Resendez

01:20:24.300 --> 01:20:27.660

About 10 minutes here so make sure we can get to as many as we can. This individual state of that they are in Pennsylvania, the new brand authority says that it will take two years to map the unserved and underserved areas that and be eligible for federal funds we can't wait that long and to start to continue projects that they already know the areas of need? How do they access funds now rather than two years from now?

Julia Pulidindi

01:20:59.190 --> 01:21:01.710

So it depends on your state. I know other states are getting a lot of money for broadband through the Treasury with ARPA funds some States might already have broadband programs in place. I know, this question is very specific to Pennsylvania. But for other communities who are having that challenge as well, I would look to other funding sources are available for you now that might meet some current needs.

Gilbert Resendez

01:21:28.050 --> 01:21:40.860

Yeah. Additionally I do want to point out that the IJJA statute, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, does state that the new FCC map will inform the unserved and underserved populations so please keep that awareness and bring that into the conversation is helpful for federal eligibility will apply to both BEAD and in Digital Equity Act Programs. Will there be required standards for community engagement in the grant APP? I think we did answer that one. But yes, I will have more information on and community engagement and engagement activities outlined in the NOFO. See here this individual so they represent a locality or a tribal government, however, state is quote unquote behind and does not yet have a State broadband office but it's currently in the process of creating one are their actions that can be taken by localities to either assist the state and information in creating that office of the state at the State level or to do preemptive work and the absence of a specific order?

Julia Pulidindi

01:23:16.050 --> 01:23:25.710

I think some of the things that we've talked about already some of the critical pieces that a State broadband office would be looking to localities to provide validate is what access looks like in your community. Doing that local coordination amongst your community stakeholders and again another plug for your State county municipal associations. You all, you know they do a lot of state level advocacy work for you, too, so working through them to advocate for a broadband office, and not just a broadband office, because a lot of times people might look at it, as just a broadband person, but a fully staffed broadband office that will have the capacity to you know effectively implement these programs.

Gilbert Resendez

01:24:04.770 --> 01:24:11.040

I agree. Again our state broadband leaders network does that we have a contact of a person that can help connect you and I'm sure has more information on what your state processes looks like accounts this interval so

that they are in the process of creating once that person I'm sure has more insight and can help connect you to the right people feel this individual 15 at their tribal governments, so if you're in a similar situation I would reach out to your Tribal coordinator within your state governmental structure and see what they can do as well to help connect you to resources or connect you to the correct people who are in the process of developing that office. I think that making sure that you're able to articulate the meeting or community where that need exists and the gaps in the challenges to deployment or adoption is going to be key that data to tell story. Will the NOFO can notice the funding opportunities conditions, the binding on every local government or the local governments have the ability to adapt the terms and conditions to account for local conditions? Will be that may be a question to wait for the specific so since there are being more than just one theme that are published, and each one is going to have their own nuances to me, I think you have to wait for that question to be more specific, when each NOFO is published.

Julia Pulidindi

01:25:45.270 --> 01:25:50.250

A lot of the questions the NOFO so we'll be defining a lot, you know the specifics of you know, the questions that have been asked here today.

Gilbert Resendez

01:26:10.860 --> 01:26:13.140

In this Question: Are institutions of higher education eligible to receive broadband services through any programs for distance learning or other educational services? I think for some specific eligibility questions we may have to defer to those notices of funding opportunities as well to find them. A number of the programs that we have a current president authorized to administer do you have pretty tight restriction, for example, the BEAD program is restricted to speak to something that letter of intent, but there may be opportunities for them to wait to the specific eligibility requirements to be published in the notice of funding opportunities.

Julia Pulidindi

01:27:00.330 --> 01:27:01.140

And I will direct you to some of our previous webinars that we've done on the various programs to be program Digital Equity and Middle Mile. If you, you know go through those slide decks it'll give you a sense of the eligible entities that can either partner with the state or apply to the state for these funds. We also have a really quick and dirty two pager on the four programs that NTIA will be administering that you can look at to, and you can find all this information on the NTIA States specifically on our state and local government pages, so if you click on resources and I click on state local governments, you can find this information there.

Gilbert Resendez

01:28:08.220 --> 01:28:25.050

The law says the governor should designate to create the state Digital Equity Plan which will receive the funds and administer them by making some plans, can we speak a little more about that process, how that process will work and how much money each State will receive.

Julia Pulidindi

01:28:27.690 --> 01:28:30.300

So for the state digital equity plans get a competitive grant program states will have to apply for these funds. There's no set of funds set aside specifically from that program for states, but under the BEAD program states will receive a minimum allocation \$100 million and then additional funds based on the number of high cost and served areas in their states, again, this will be determined by those FCC maps and again the BEAD Program. The focus already are connecting those unserved underserved communities and Community anchor institutions without gigabit connections. And I think I saw a question in the chat about the definitions of unserved and underserved communities. Again, the NOFO will outline those in more detail, but a general rule is that unserved areas are defined as areas that don't have access to speeds of 25 three and underserved are those that don't have access to speeds of 120.

Gilbert Resendez

01:29:31.050 --> 01:29:41.310

Yeah. Thank you, Julia .and I do know that we had approaching the end of the time, and I do see quite a few questions about when I when an individual can get the transcripts or video recordings for this session after the presentation. So I do want to address that, before going to our last slide our closing slide and this presentation, along with the recording will be available and a full transcript excuse me, will be available on the NTIA website by Wednesday March 30 and on the website, there is a past event page you go to events and past events that's where the full length. So we'll have it, this information published by next Wednesday, at the latest, so stay tuned to make sure we're accurately transcribing things, but we will get that published as quickly as we can. And with that, I think that concludes the webinar and Q & A session we know there are a number of great questions, we were able to get to. To ask more detailed questions about the broadband programs or Infrastructure investment and Jobs Act Program please email us at broadbandforall@ntia.gov. We do have a number of other webinars that are coming up, and these are open to the public, and they will be on April 6, April 27 and May 11 for more information on those webinars will sign up please visit the website longer screen, which will also be included in the slides. Right and thank you very much, everyone.