

### Summer 2022 Virtual Tribal Consultation #3

Moderator: Adam Geisler

September 16, 2022

Adam Geisler

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All right. Well, thank you, everybody, for your patience. We want to give a few minutes here to get things moving. First off, I just want to say thank you for joining us today. This is our third tribal consultation for the tribal broadband connectivity program, NOFO number two. This is the third tribal consultation that we've had on this topic. We had one on Monday. We had one on Wednesday, and we have one today. So, this will be our third time here addressing a set of four questions that we have sent out in a dear tribal leader letter on August 18<sup>th</sup>.

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Before we get too far. I also want to just say, (Luiseno Language) Miiyuyum, my name is Adam Geisler, and I'm the division chief for the Tribal Connectivity and Nation to Nation Coordination Division, and an enrolled member of the La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians. And today, I'm actually coming to you live from Honolulu, Hawaii, which is the ancestral homelands of the Native Hawaiian people. And I want to acknowledge that, that we're coming to you today to discuss NOFO number two from the ancestral homelands. People here from the natural springs in Honolulu. I was told when I was asking about the right way to do the land acknowledgment how folks in Hawaii identified themselves, and it was often by where natural water was occurring. So, there's actually a spring here that I was asked to speak to and acknowledge the people that we're around this spring. So, with that we have quite a bit in front of us today. If we can move on to the next slide, please.

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We're going to be doing a few things. One, we're going to be covering some welcoming and opening remarks. We're really honored today to have both Assistant Secretary, Alan Davidson provide some opening remarks, as well as the invocation by President Jon Nez of the Navajo Nation. We're then going to do a quick overview of the tribal broadband connectivity program. And then from there we're going to jump into the four questions that were a part of what we are asking in relationship to NOFO number two within the dear tribal leader letter dated August eighteenth. I also should highlight that today will be the last day that we're accepting comments on these four questions. So again, as you're going through the consultation, and you want to submit those in writing. I just want to highlight that those are going to be due today at six p.m., eastern time. So, with that we'll go ahead and move forward with the next slide.

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All right. So, it is really my distinct honor to recognize Assistant Secretary, Alan Davidson. Mr. Davidson is not only the Assistant Secretary of Commerce, but also, he has two hats, pretty common in Indian country, no different in government at times, where he is also the Administrator for NTIA. I have a lot of respect for Mr. Davidson. This individual has really stood behind addressing the digital divide of the

nation and quarterbacking not only the TBCP program, but all the dollars that are here at NTIA. And I'll tell you firsthand that he has spent the time to go see the issues. He spent nearly a week travelling Alaska and putting his feet on the ground and talking to the community and understanding what the issues really are, and the challenges that we all face when we talk about connecting every household in America. And so, it is again, my distinct honor to recognize Mr. Alan Davidson to provide his opening remarks today. Over to you, Assistant Secretary Davidson.

Allen Davidson

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Hello, I'm Alan Davidson, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for communications and information, and the Administrator of NTIA. I'd like to take a moment to both welcome and thank all the tribal leaders who are joining us today, as well as the other stakeholders who are with us for this consultation. As those of you who have participated in these consultations before well know, these meetings are just vital for us in shaping our policies for connecting the unconnected on tribal lands. Last January, for example, you helped us determine the timing and the funding amounts for a second round of the tribal broadband connectivity program which we'll be discussing today. We really believe in these consultations, and we appreciate the time that you all are putting in to be with us today. We all know the importance of universal, affordable, high-speed Internet service. It's just essential infrastructure today for connecting rural communities, educating our students, keeping us healthy. I was able to hear firsthand about some of these needs most recently in a trip I took to visit with tribal communities in Alaska just a few weeks ago, and it was incredibly powerful to see firsthand what it really means to people living in these communities to be able to get a high-speed, reliable, affordable connection and also to see the challenges. We visited with native community members in places like Napakiak and Napaskiak. The village of Tanana on the Yukon River. We were in the town of Port Lions on Kodiak Island. In each of these communities we were able to speak with the members, who, you know, live in very different places, but share very similar stories about their need and the opportunity before us. You know we heard about the importance of access in remote places, we heard about the importance of affordability. It was incredible to see the actual bills that people brought us, showed us on their phones seven or eight hundred dollars a month that some folks were paying there for actually very low bandwidth connections. And it was incredible to hear about the kind of opportunity and hope that we can bring, if we can actually provide, that kind of affordable and reliable high-speed access. Now I was very grateful for the stories that these folks shared with us, and I think our whole team came away invigorated, and feeling a sense of purpose about the importance of this next round of funding. To help meet all these needs, you know, to date NTIA has made a total of 69 different awards, totaling over seven hundred million dollars through our tribal broadband connectivity program, and there's a lot more to come. Thanks to President Biden's leadership and leadership in Congress, we've passed the historic bipartisan law that's designed to connect one hundred percent of the people in America. That includes all the people in our tribal communities. The broadband, the bipartisan infrastructure law included an additional two billion dollars for our tribal connectivity program which triples the amount of funding that we had before. We had previously allocated a billion dollars of funding to the existing applications that we got in our first round.

We've added another billion dollars based on the consultations that we had with all of you to that first round, and we reserved the remaining funds approximately one billion dollars for a second notice of funding opportunity which we really want to hear from you about today. We've targeted this new notice to open later next month, and eligible tribal entities will have about six months to fill out the new applications. We'll be incorporating your feedback from today's session into this new notice, so please speak up in today's meeting. Submit written comments to us reach out to the appropriate staff of the NTIA. We want to hear your feedback and your ideas. There's a saying in the civic tech community that I come from, that we should aspire to build with, not for, build with communities, not for communities. And that is why these consultations are so important. We know that we have a unique opportunity to work with you to help close the digital divide across Indian country. How we proceed is important, which is why that the Commerce Department and NTIA why, we're hosting this tribal consultation today. We are excited. I am excited to continue working with you and our other tribal partners to meet this historic moment and provide Internet service for everyone. Thank you. And we appreciate your participation.

Adam Geisler

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All right. Well, thank you Assistant Secretary Davidson for those opening remarks, and I just really want to echo the sentiment around building communities with you, not for you. The TBCP program has really been founded in such a thing. So, thank you again, Assistant Secretary. Well with that we are really honored to have a Tribal leader that I have a lot of respect for. I've been following him this week on social media. It seems like a very busy man between the Department of Labor and the bipartisan. Excuse me in the recent legislation signing the Treasury United States swearing in. You've been a busy man, Mr. President Nez, and I really just want to say thank you for finding some time to come in and provide us with the opening invocation and blessing for today's tribal consultation on the second round, or the second NOFO for the TBCP program. So, with that, it's my distinct honor to recognize President Jonathan Nez, of the Navajo Nation. Over to you President.

President Nez

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Thank you. And good morning to those that are in the western part of the United States, and a good afternoon for those on the eastern part of the United States, as was mentioned, Jonathan Nez, President of the Navajo Nation. Thank you, Adam, and the team there at NTIA, one of our own Christ Becenti as well. And you know there's an opportunity here to give our tribal input through the second NOFO for the tribal broadband connectivity program. So, as always, let's lift this discussion to the Creator, and ask for strength, wisdom, protection, and good health. If I may, I like to give the invocation in our own Navajo Language. (*Invocation spoken in Navajo*).

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We give this time over to you, the Creator. We ask for strength. We ask for wisdom. Throughout these meetings the tribes get the information. Clearly to our federal friends. Many of us grew up with our own native tongue, and at times, you know,

getting that in English is a challenge. But I know that with your help, we will communicate effectively and clearly throughout this tribal consultation, and to provide the fast internet, better broadband, and telecommunication throughout this country. And we also pray Lord, that we change some of the regulations and policies so that things can get done a lot quicker. And so, we give this time to you, and we appreciate Adam and NTIA, and all our tribal leaders that are on call today. And so, we lift this up to you, Creator, and pray to solve in your name. Amen. Thank you, Adam.

Adam Geisler 00:16:46.650 --> 00:16:55.000  
Thank you, President Nez. I appreciate it and save travels to you and your team to make your way home.

President Nez 00:16:56.010 --> 00:16:57.159  
Thank you.

Adam Geisler 00:16:57.200 --> 00:17:12.999  
Well, what a great way to get us started in a good way today. You know it's always great to have a leader acknowledge, I think, the work that we're all trying to do, and bring us together to really address some of the challenges that we have in front of us, but also acknowledged some of the challenges we've overcome, and that's what today is about. And how do we continue to improve the things that we have that we've been working towards in addressing the digital divide and providing high-speed Internet service that is affordable to our indigenous communities. So, with that we're going to go ahead and jump into the next slide. Carole, would you mind going over how to bring people on and off of mute as well as the raise hand function.

Carole Garner- Production 00:17:45.590 --> 00:18:13.889  
Yeah, sure Adam, I'm happy to do that. So, the slide you see here, just it has the quick, important information. The way we facilitate your comments is, if you have something to say about a question that is currently being posed, and we will put those up after this slide. You just use the raise hand function on the bottom tool bar in zoom. How we used that before. We have a little diagram here that shows you where that is. If you're on a mobile device or a phone and you don't have this functionality, if you dialed in, you can press star nine on your device, and that will actually raise your hand. I can see that on my side, and we will know that you would like to speak. So, it's as simple as that. If you also want to, you know, provide feedback. You can use the question, Q & A box. It's right next to the chat box. We ask that you put that in the Q & A because we can capture that after the event most effectively in that manner. So, hopefully that's helpful. And we'd love to hear from you. Back to you, Adam.

Adam Geisler 00:19:04.610 --> 00:19:22.579  
Thanks, Carole. And just as a reminder for today that this tribal consultation is really meant to be a government-to-government consultation, and again in recognition of the tribal leaders that we have on the line. I am going to ask that we hear from tribal leaders specifically, and if your respected tribal government or tribal leader has

given you the authority to speak on behalf of the tribe. I realize sometimes, as a former tribal leader there were moments when I would come into situations, and I would like my subject matter expert to speak on my behalf or my tribe's behalf. That is absolutely okay. But I do want to get on the record that if you are going to be doing that, that you have the consent of the tribe to do that. So again, this is intended to be a government-to-government consultation respecting the sovereignty of tribal nations, and the unique relationship that the United States Government holds with respective, federally recognized tribes.

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All right. So, with that we'll go ahead, and we'll jump on to the next slide, please. Okay. So, as I mentioned, we were going to do a brief overview. And you heard, Assistant Secretary Davidson mentioned that we've gotten over seven hundred million dollars out so far, we've actually made sixty-nine awards, totaling over seven hundred and twenty million dollars, and there's more awards to come. I think a lot of you are wondering, you know, Adam was that the end? And no, it is actually not even close to the end. We have several hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of projects in the pipe right now going through the clearance process that I'm sure many of you have been engaged on with our team in the cures, and, as I mentioned, you heard me say, hundreds of millions of dollars. That's because one of the decisions that we have reached here at NTIA after the tribal consultation earlier this year was to add an additional billion dollars from the bipartisan infrastructure law to the existing TBCP round one NOFO. So, for those of you that are saying, hey? You know what's taking so long? We've added more money, and we're making more awards. So, we are going to not award just a billion dollars in round one. But we've added another billion dollars to it from the bipartisan infrastructure law to make it a total of nearly two billion dollars that we are going to be funding. So, we heard you loud and clear to lessen the burden. And with that being said, we also heard a number of you share that there were concerns about folks that either didn't have an opportunity to apply. Or folks that still maybe were receiving the five hundred thousand equitable distribution and wanted to be able to come back to the table. So, after hearing all of that, we also reached the conclusion that we would use the balance of those funds to open up a second-round, which is pretty consistent with the feedback that we've heard during the consultative process. So, to recap, we've, made sixty-nine awards, with many more to come, totaling over seven hundred and twenty million dollars. We also added an additional billion dollars from the bipartisan infrastructure law.

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The program received initially two billion dollars from the BIL. We took one billion of that and added it to the existing NOFO. So, we're going to be making two billion dollars' worth of awards, roughly, and then the remaining funds that are left over through this round one is going to be rolled over, and that's going to be approximately one billion dollars that we're going to be talking about how we should be approaching for round two of the NOFO. So, with that, we'll go ahead and go on to the next slide, and we're going to talk a little bit about the four topics that we're really looking to dig into today, and I do ask that, I want to recognize one, that that there are probably a number of items of folks who want to share in relationship

to the program. But I am going to ask that we keep the discussion, if we can, around these four primary areas largely in part, because, as we've talked to the team and frankly fielded your feedback throughout NOFO number one, we've not even come to the conclusion. I think we've all collectively recognized that we do need to talk about these four items in particular.

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So, with that being said, we have four questions on the table that we're going to discuss today. We're going to go through these one at a time and open up feedback around each question so that we can capture this specific feedback for each one of these questions. But here's the overall picture: should NTIA consider prioritization of new projects in the tribal broadband connectivity program. If so, how should these be prioritized? The second question we're going to discuss is, what type of guidance or documentation can or should be included in, or in addition to the NOFO that would assist the applicants with completing their application? Three is a technical assistance question: How can technical assistance from NTIA be approved to ensure timely and complete submissions? Number four is a big one. I've heard a lot of you discuss supply chain concerns. And so, number four is going to be in relationship to: Should tribal broadband connectivity program applicants be subject to the Build America Buy America act domestic sourcing requirements for materials and equipment? Additionally, how does the Build America Buy America Act impact applicant's ability to complete their proposed projects?

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So, four very detailed questions that we are going to go through one at a time, and so with that let's go ahead and move on to the next slide, and we'll start talking about question number one. All right. So again, we're engaging here in government-to-government consultation. I'm really hoping to get your feedback. Again, please use the raise hand feature, or what is it, Carole? Star Nine, in the, if you're dialing in via phone so we can put you in the queue. And we will announce your name, if you're up. We'll also say, if you're in the batter's box. Mr. Matthew Rogotzke here will be helping us navigate who's in the queue or in the batter's box as we work our way through these questions.

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Question number one: Should NTIA consider prioritization of new projects in the tribal broadband connectivity program? If so, how should these be prioritized?

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And so, I'm going to tease this a little bit. We have a billion dollars left, and it's a very different landscape today than where we were previously. And so, you know one of the questions that I guess a sub part to this again. I'm just trying to get folks thinking is, should we be looking at prioritizing this next round, based upon speed thresholds, setting a requirement around, giving preference to those projects that have higher speed. Should we be looking at giving preference to those projects that are shovel ready? Should we be giving preference to applicants that are receiving the equitable distribution, the five hundred thousand in round one, or that applied

in round one, should they get preference or priority over those that maybe had not applied previously.

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If there's any other dynamics, or there are there, we did hear some folks, I'll just be honest with you here. In consultation one that shared that they don't believe that folks that receive funding in this first round of TBCP should be eligible for the second round if they received a large award. So, with that, Matt, I imagine the queue is going to start to fill up, and I will go ahead and pause, and we'll go ahead and engage in any tribe later feedback.

Matt Rogotzke

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Yep. We had Jennifer Webster with an early hand raise, followed by Joe Garcia, and we'll add other folks as they pop in.

Adam Geisler

00:27:04.610 --> 00:27:14.049

Wonderful! All right, Jennifer. We're going to be bringing you off mute, and if you could actually, there's usually a fifteen second thing there, so I'll give it a second for ten. Jennifer, if you if you don't mind, we're going to bring you off mute. And if you could just say the name of your tribe and your title so we can capture that this is being recorded, and we will post not only the recording, but the transcript online into the future. So, with that, Jennifer over to you.

Jennifer Webster

00:27:34.220 --> 00:27:36.500

Okay, thank you. Can you hear me? Can you see me?

Adam Geisler

00:27:39.230 --> 00:27:40.450

Let's see. Yes, we can.

Jennifer Webster

00:27:41.680 --> 00:27:51.890

Okay, I'm prepared to go through all four questions. But would you prefer me to just go through item one?

Adam Geisler

Item, one, please.

Jennifer Webster

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Okay? Okay, Thank you. Thank you, Adam. I thank you, President Nez. My name is Jennifer Webster, from Oneida Nation, Council Member. So, for question one, in regard to scoring. The previous application and a future application, the United Nations applied for the TBCP funding a year ago in September 2021. We were very disappointed that we had not been awarded the funding. The application took a lot of time, money, and effort to submit, and we believe that we will be, we had a well thought out and detailed application. The nation would like to know the specifics of how our application was scored, so that we can ensure that our application for round two funding is fully responsive.

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Also, in regard to streamline application process, given the immense amount of effort in our initial application, we do not relish repeating the same process. We would like to see the application process streamlined for those who applied previously for TBCP funding. In regard to priority consideration, previous application, we believe that the nation's application made it through the programmatic review of what was not funded due to oversubscription. If this is the case, we believe our second application should be given priority consideration. In regard to extra points, moving broadband forward, we have moved ahead on a number of initiatives that have detailed in our grant applications such as fiber audit and working on a tower build out. We would like to see extra points awarded for round two applicants, round two applicants who have shown initiatives to address broadband needs and move forward in their broadband plans. So let us be clear, however, that the need for broadband is still great and due to lack of funding, unserved tribal members continue to suffer.

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And then, in regards to unique situations, the urban and rural areas. Our reservation is relatively unique, in that it encompasses the city of Green Bay, which genuinely has good broadband. But as soon as you leave the city limits, broadband access is very poor, especially in the south and northwest corners of the reservation, which are very rural in nature. And we ask that the upcoming NOFO provide for such unique situations as ours, and does not penalize us for having a mix of rural and urban areas. This is the end of my comments for question one, and then, we will also submit our written comments as well. And thank you.

Adam Geisler

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Thank you. Ms. Webster. And again, one of the things that I try to do with these consultations is just make sure that I heard the feedback appropriately. In capturing this, we are establishing a record, and we use this record to build our next NOFO, or to make amendments to. In the event that folks question, we look at, we look back to the record and the feedback that we had for those processes. So, I want to make sure that I heard you correctly, and that will go for everybody else that that shares today. First off in relationship to the specifics of the scoring. The scoring in particular is not something that NTIA publishes or provides. However, for applicants. And again, we have not sent out notification. I should also say that to applicants that may be unsuccessful, so applications are still under review. I want to make that point, but I do want to also share, because and then I'll get into the other components that I heard that in the event that you are an unsuccessful applicant in general, this is for everybody on the line. We are going to open up, there is going to be a ten-day window in the event that you receive a letter from NTIA that says that you were unsuccessful and that we encourage you to apply again. And in that letter, we'll also identify a window to request the feedback from NTIA about any of the challenges that there may have been within the application. So again, I want to make sure everybody at least walks away from here understanding that we do intend to engage in discussions with applicants that may have been unsuccessful in round one to talk about how to improve during round two.

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The other thing that I'll point out. We're going to get into this in just a minute. But the next round is actually a six-month application window, and in that six-month application window one of the other questions we're going to be asking is about how to provide better technical assistance. I'll remind everybody, during round one we were in the middle of a pandemic. I think the TBCP team started off with a strong, solid two people that we grew to three people. Then we were, and by the time we were into technical assistance we were up to five. And so, we now have a small army inside NTIA of predominantly indigenous people from the broadband space of over fifteen people. With one detailee Danee Wilson over to the White House. So, we want to ensure, and we'll talk about this in a little while longer, how we can provide better boots on the ground technical assistance in round two. Now that we have a six-month window and more bodies to assist in providing technical assistance.

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So, in addition to streamlining, and I appreciate the feedback. And if I heard you correctly, Ms. Webster, what you shared was that it took a lot of time and resources to put the application together, and that you want to lessen the burden on the tribe and at the bare minimum that you should be given some level of preference for participating and going through the process in round one, which is great. I appreciate you sharing that. And then the other thing that I thought was really important here was, in addition to looking at giving prioritization around those that applied originally. I appreciate your consideration of also those in general that have shown an initiative to move forward in their broadband space. So, maybe they weren't funded in round one and again clarification would be appreciated if I'm hearing you wrong. But the way I took that was whether you were, whether you applied in round one or not. If you're a tribe that's showing an initiative, using your resources to solve the digital divide, that should count for something. So, did I capture that correctly?

Jennifer Webster

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Yes.

Adam Geisler

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Okay. Is there anything else you wanted to correct, or you wanted to add that I may have missed for the first question?

Jennifer Webster

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No, you've got it.

Adam Geisler

00:34:56.870 --> 00:35:04.290

Well, thank you for being on, and we will, I know you have a few more responses to the other questions, so I know we'll hear from you a little bit more. Thank you.

Jennifer Webster

00:35:04.300 --> 00:35:05.229

Thank you.

Adam Geisler

00:35:06.820 --> 00:35:08.390

All right. Who do we have next?

Matt Rogotzke

00:35:08.400 --> 00:35:15.519

Yup. Joe Garcia is up next, and then after that Sally Fineday is in the hole. So, Joe Garcia.

Adam Geisler

00:35:18.640 --> 00:35:19.890

All right, Councilman Garcia. We're bringing them off mute. There's usually a little bit of a delay. Councilman Garcia?

Carole Garner- Production

00:35:42.480 --> 00:35:44.809

Councilman, you may come off mute.

Joe Garcia

00:35:44.910 --> 00:35:50.079

Okay, can you hear me? Yeah, I'm doing fine. How are you?

Adam Geisler

00:35:52.330 --> 00:36:10.580

Doing good, sir, Doing good.

Joe Garcia

00:36:10.590 --> 00:36:37.369

Yeah. Thank you for having that number one. I'm Joe Garcia, Councilman from Ohkay Owingeh. Small pueblo out in northern New Mexico, just about forty-five miles north of the state capital of Santa Fe. Anyway, my comments for the first question. Well, before I go there, I just want to thank you for having all of these sessions. I think it's important to continue to communicate with the tribes throughout the nation. It's very, very important, and so I'll proceed with the answering the question. The first part of it is that if you categorize the tribes in the country, there are those that didn't apply. There are those that applied for some small amount. There are those that apply for a large project. There are some that applied and were funded at a large amount. And so, when you go to that route a lot of the initial applications, I believe, were around developing the infrastructure, and by that, I mean the last, the middle mile, and the last mile. And so, if you look at the recipients. Some of those have already been addressed by virtue of granting the grant to those tribes, but those that didn't receive any infrastructure bill are still stuck with having to do infrastructure. So, to start a new project process and new application requirements would be as the Navajo Nations that, a bear to get done. Because if you, if you haven't got that other infrastructure, then how are you going to build the rest of it? And so, it's important to understand that logical sequence of build. And so important, and then I feel really bad for those that didn't have the opportunity to apply, because that doesn't mean that they didn't have the need. I think it just means more so that they needed more assistance in getting it developed. And so, your technical assistance part, I think it's going to be a good thing. But for Ohkay Owingeh and northern New Mexico, we do have the last mile provisions kind of in place. It's just a matter of building the last mile pieces, which is part of the consideration for prioritizing.

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Plus, it's not just equipment, you can buy all the equipment you want. But if you don't have the infrastructure, and I'll tell you which part, our plan was involving developing fiber optic fiber lines to the homes within the community. But if you don't have, you can buy the fiber, but if you don't have the part to install it is pointless. And so, I think it's important to consider this. It depends a whole lot on where the Tribes are at this point in time. And so, gathering data and gathering that information is going to be a bear, it's not going to be easy thing. But, I think it all has to do with connectivity program. So, the questions you pose are along the right lines, and so I hope that you will consider not starting a brand-new process for the, I mean for the ones that have already applied, because they already have their priorities laid out, but maybe start a new one for those that have not applied at all. And how you split that dollar amount is going to be a tricky thing, but you know, we do it kind of a fifty percent fifty percent that might work. I don't know, because I don't know the statistics.

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But anyway, that's what I offer, and, I presume I will be on the other questions as well. But thank you, and if there's anything that you don't quite understand, let me know.

Adam Geisler

00:40:12.060 --> 00:40:28.040

I will. First off, Councilman, thank you for joining us today, and for your continued advocacy in support of the needs of Indian country, your community, and you've also been a great supporter of our team, and I just want to say thank you. I hear you loud and clear in the concern that you raised about, and we have talked about this, we in this is why we're consulting is, do we, how do we treat the folks that have applied previously? That may be received, or are receiving the five hundred thousand, or maybe aren't receiving anything, and we do have some folks that are unsuccessful in general in the application. And so, you know, how do we work with those groups as opposed to excuse me, respect to tribal nations as opposed to those that have not applied previously? And I appreciate you also acknowledging that there were folks that didn't apply. It's not because they didn't want to. It really was a resource issue at the time when they were balancing, you know all the COVID-related dollars and looking at other, they just had other priorities that took precedent. Some of them were impacted by natural disasters, and just were not able to come into the process.

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So, I hear you loud and clear, and you can correct me if I'm wrong. But what I think I heard you say is that maybe we should entertain looking at breaking up the application into those that applied, and those previously, and then those that did not. And I think where you're coming from is to lessen the burden, and the expense on those that had previously applied, and not to just create some whole new application process. Did I hear that correctly?

Joe Garcia 00:41:55.700 --> 00:42:09.990  
That's correct. And then, just to point out that I guess it's okay to lay out the dollars that Ohkay Owingeh applied for, our application was well over five million dollars. But if you consider that we only received the five hundred thousand, if we receive that at all. Then that that's ten percent. So, ten percent, if you're going to build an infrastructure that is going to cost five million, and you only have ten percent of that available, what can you do with it? And that sort of where a lot of the Tribes are or less, Adam. Thank you.

Adam Geisler 00:42:39.010 --> 00:42:41.779  
No, I appreciate that. I hear you there. Thank you, Councilman. I think I have captured there, and we have again. This will be in the transcript, and in the recording, in case we do need any additional follow up. But I appreciate the feedback, and I know we'll hear from you more on the other questions. Thank you. I think you said we had. Sally Fineday with Leech Lake next. That's correct.

Matt Rogotzke 00:42:59.240 --> 00:43:13.990  
Yep, from a great reservation that I'm familiar with. But anyway, and then Will Micklin is up after that. But Sally I'm sure we'll have a couple second delay here.

Adam Geisler 00:43:19.270 --> 00:43:24.819  
Well, we better let everybody know, Matt. There was a point in time where Matt used to work for Leech Lake. How long Matt?

Matt Rogotzke 00:43:26.390 --> 00:43:32.490  
I was there two years, and it's a great place up in Northern Minnesota.

Sally Fineday 00:43:45.530 --> 00:44:12.839  
And it's still very beautiful. So, this is Sally. Can you hear me, you guys ready?

Adam Geisler  
We are ready. We can hear you loudly clear, Sally, if you could just give us your name, title, and the nation you're representing.

Sally Fineday  
Sally Fineday, grants specialist, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. So, one of the things that we've encountered as we're going through this process is that as we're trying to determine for the map, the new map that's being developed is that our tribal lands still have a lot of allotment land on it. One of the reasons that some of the companies like, for instance, Paul Bunyan Net. You know we met with them, and they said, we're not coming into that area because of the fact that there's allotment land. It will take us four, maybe five years to contact all the people that are required to. That's going on and we said for us at the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, we work closely with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, so I think our strength as a tribal nation that are receiving the fiber that's necessary to bring the connectivity and control over the tribes' communications in our tribal lands, and which we plan to include. Sorry, I'm on travel, so it's difficult at this time. But I think that's what I'm trying to say is that we have to consider that the Bureau of Indian Affairs has a big control over a lot of tribal lands, because of the fact that we have allotment land and trust

land and it takes time to come across our tribal lands. And that should be a prioritization piece so that people know in advance about the allotment land and we definitely have to consider that when we figure out who has authority and the length of time in prioritization. Miigwech.

Adam Geisler

00:45:29.700 --> 00:45:45.359

Thank you, Sally. I think one of the things I'm hearing in there is just, and maybe that's maybe that's something that might fit in, even in the next question is additional considerations we should be accounting for. We're trying to not have to run through the Paper Reduction Act. You have to go through these crazy publications. Government process, right? Anytime you ask anything that looks like a survey. But one of the things that I think you bring to mind Sally, is in our process. Calling out a distinct section within the NOFO. Maybe in the narrative where we ask exactly how many miles or excuse me exactly how many acres of allotted land are going to be encumbered or served through the proposed project. And again. I think that that helps to understand the funding request, because to your point right, that's each one of those pieces of property is going to require an appraisal, and it's going to have to go through its own unique environmental process unless they are adjacent, although I know we are working on some of those items with Assistant Secretary Newland and his team. But nonetheless, I hear you in terms of making sure that we account for some of those time constraints related to permitting if we're going to look at prioritization. So, with that being said, Sally, just to confirm, I think what you're really, what you're concerned about is that you shouldn't be penalized if the project is going to take a little bit longer because of the unique lands that you're going to be working with. Is that a fair way to kind of encapsulate that?

Sally Fineday

00:47:14.440 --> 00:47:16.549

Yes, Miigwech.

Adam Geisler

00:47:16.560 --> 00:47:17.189

Okay, thank you. All right. Well, great to have the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe on. Thank you so much for joining us today. And with that Matt, who do we have next?

Matt Rogotzke

Next up, Will Micklin. And then, after that, James Stevens is in the hole.

Adam Geisler

00:47:38.620 --> 00:47:40.060

All right, Mr. Micklin. There he is. How are you today, Will?

Will Micklin

I'm good. Thank you. Thanks for opportunity. My English name is Will Micklin, I'm a Vice-president for the Executive Council for the central council of Tlingit Haida Indians of Alaska, for the regional tribe in southeast Alaska, the thirty-four thousand tribal citizens in the thirty-five thousand approximate square miles, and an applicant in round one, and hopefully in round two. So, thank you for the opportunity to address the question on prioritization of new projects for tribal broadband connectivity program and for the record I'm authorized to speak for Central Council and President Richard J. Peterson and the Executive Council. So, thank you. So we expressed in the first consultation session our opinion that applications from round

one should be carefully considered in the round two, especially those that had not received full funding, or were descoped to the five hundred K minimum.

00:49:27.490 --> 00:49:38.619

Or that presents the opportunities for serving, providing broadband deployment to served and unserved constituents. We remember that the purpose of the program is to provide broadband deployment to served and unserved households. So, we think that should remain that priority. We don't think the priority is performance. As we said in our prior remarks, that, incenting higher performance, leans the weights towards already served communities, although many may be underserved, but they predominantly have the infrastructure available to deploy broadband to their communities, and for many reasons that we are extremely familiar with. There's a lack of incentive for carriers to extend broadband to tribal communities that are not as high a profit margin as other communities.

00:50:47.210 --> 00:50:59.590

So, we think that falls within the mandate for the program that it sets for itself to provide broadband to served and unserved household where that is the priority rather than speed, we see in programs like Reconnect, pushing speeds up even higher, one hundred by ten, one hundred symmetrical, and with the opportunity to advance beyond. You know that's all well and great but if you don't have service that can at least be characterized as broadband, you're never going to get to the higher speeds. We think this is also informed by the review of the applications. I know there's been some questions about the evaluations, and in round two, with any communities receiving a lesser amount down to five hundred K. Not unfunded, but the five hundred K. For many are substantially below their application request, and many have re-established that that funded amount of and in the lesser amount to pre-development due diligence type activities for the next funding round or other funding opportunities.

00:52:36.100 --> 00:52:49.210

And finally, we think that the evaluation between round one and two should be very careful in the State of Alaska. Of all places, where funding should be reduced, we feel State of Alaska is likely the least served, most remote of the tribes and other eligible applicants. It really needs a hard look at getting dollars out there to at least get minimum broadband deployment performance and connectivity out to our communities. There are a lot of complications in it that are seen in that are manifest for applicants in the NTIA review, and it is no surprise to us that NTIA reviewers would be somewhat puzzled by the structure of tribal communities in Alaska. We are the regional tribe in southeast Alaska, Tlingits and Haidas throughout Southeast Alaska are our citizens, enrolled citizens. There are also eighteen Indian Reorganization Act tribes. Their members, their tribal systems are our travel citizens as well as their tribal citizens. They are also shareholders. The Sea Alaska corporation is the regional corporation. Our tribal citizens, our shareholders in Sea Alaska regional that can also be shareholders in their village corporation. This provides a level of complexity that is not duplicated in the lower forty-eight and Hawaii, and it's through no fault of our own. We did not enact the Alaska Native

Claims Settlement Act that divided us between tribes and regional corporations and village corporations.

00:54:49.660 --> 00:55:06.809

Central Council is an aboriginal indigenous tribe. We won our aboriginal lands litigation in 1958. In the Indian Board of Claims, Southeast Alaska is our aboriginal lands, and the United States, in consenting to our trespass suit for settlement in 1935 recognized us as representing all Tlingits and Haidas in Southeast Alaska. So, it's no, that's familiar to us, because we wrestle with this every day through other Federal programs and opportunities. It is no surprise that this is a novel for NTIA, but it is meaningful for round two, because it was meaningful in round one. I know there's still issues to be resolved in round one. But we don't want round two to repeat the puzzlement over this type of complexity. So, given that we think that applications in one whether fully or partially funded, where they can demonstrate the need for unserved and underserved communities to receive broadband deployment should be the priority for NTIA. So, I thank you for the opportunity, and we'll get written comments in by the end of the day. Thank you.

Adam Geisler

00:56:32.550 --> 00:56:50.119

I was muted there. Sorry about that. But thank you, Mr. Micklin. I really appreciate the feedback. I think the nuances of Alaska obviously remain very relevant in this conversation. And the feedback that you've provided, I think, has been very helpful in terms of keeping us focused, which is, you know, again, and I know some of you were looking at strictly middle mile projects, or different types of solutions that were out there, and I appreciate the feedback that you, that you brought back here, Mr. Micklin, which is prioritizing households, and that is an important part of the enabling legislation for the TBC Program. That's an important reason why this program exists. The number one mission that NTIA has within the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth is around connecting every single household, and that was, it was doubled down on by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law which complements the activities of this program. So, I appreciate that.

00:57:35.490 --> 00:57:51.950

Also, I just want to acknowledge what you shared. For those of you that that may have never worked in Alaska or new to Alaska, there's actually two regionally federally recognized tribes in the State of Alaska or two within Alaska, as probably a better way to say that, that have their own unique nuances to them. And, I do just want to say thank you to Will, and also to ICAS. We have members on from ICAS for being patient, educating our team on that unique trust relationship that exists with both of those regional tribes, again making this process unique. So, I hear you loud and clear, Mr. Micklin, that we want to prioritize homes. We definitely don't want to erode away from any tribes' Sovereignty. Any federally recognized tribes sovereignty and want to make sure that as we're thinking about even the mapping components of this and the consent components of this. How that fits within the State of Alaska. So, I appreciate the sentiment, and I know the team is taking notes around this. So, thank you. Okay, we'll move on. Matt, looks like we have another speaker.

Matt Rogotzke

00:58:46.070 --> 00:59:04.450

Yep. Just one in the queue right now, James Stevens, sure will call out for other folks to raise their hands if, before moving on to the next question after that, but James Stevens.

James Stevens

00:59:05.360 --> 00:59:12.440

Thank you for allowing me to speak. My name is James Stevens. I'm the tribal administrator for the native village of Atka. I'm, speaking on behalf of tribal leadership today because they don't have broadband in Atka and they have a hard time participating in Zoom calls. So, to jump right into your questions that I heard asked. We are a first-round applicant. We joined with a consortium of tribes who put in a single application for last mile connectivity. We still don't have middle mile connectivity that's adequate to our needs. We're all satellite based. We are using right now, we're looking at an interim solution, using Starlink, which just got turned on in our area. We're waiting for the equipment and are going to come up with some kind of interim distribution network to provide affordable connectivity to our households. And I want to, I'm always reminded that the goal of the program, the stated goal is affordable connectivity at certain speeds and satellites do not provide the speeds and the latency, the reduced latency that gives true broadband performance. So, the first round of funding for five hundred thousand dollars is just for last mile.

01:00:38.520 --> 01:00:46.600

We still need the middle mile connection to get the speeds required. As stated in the law, we need fiber optic cable, and we are three hundred miles away from a fiber optic connection. So, we are looking at about thirty million dollars to connect our community with fiber. So that would that's our intent. In the second round of funding is to seek that thirty million dollars, because that's what it takes. As far as shovel readiness goes I would object to inclusion of that because in our talking with the fiber people. It's an eighteen-month wait to get the fiber we need, the money now to place the order. We need the money now to get the permitting done under NEPA, and you know that that's, you know that's an expensive proposition. We can't, we don't have the money laying around to hire an engineer to design a thirty million dollar project. So yeah, that's really it. I mean, you know, we're so far out there that it's, you know. Nobody wants to provide us service. The limited service we get is expensive, for example. You know, we're still being throttled down, you know, after we've breached a data cap so that we can't provide. We cannot sit in on zoom meetings. I'm in Anchorage. I have a good connection. Out in Atka that they don't have. It gets expensive. Their bill goes from, you know, on or a month up to six hundred a month if you exceed the data cap.

01:02:20.360 --> 01:02:39.940

The problem is with these Internet service providers that are operating statewide. You know they receive hundreds of millions of dollars of subsidies to build out the systems and tens of millions of dollars in operating subsidies through the Universal Service Fund, yet we are still charged upwards of six hundred dollars a month if we exceed data caps. So, these are the issues that we're trying to address. We need the

funding. We need it in the second round, and we're not afraid to put out, you know. There's the reconnect program out right now. That's got a billion dollars in it. I'm hearing there's another billion dollars being put out in the tribal broadband connectivity program. So, the issue is that connectivity is vital to our survival as a community, economic survival. And so, that's what we need. We need the understanding that you know a small tribe like Atka actually does need thirty million dollars to get the connectivity it needs to join the world. Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

- Adam Geisler 01:03:35.680 --> 01:03:42.899  
Mr. Stevens, just for clarification in the location of the village of Atka. You guys are out in the Aleutian chain. Correct?
- James Stevens 01:03:43.130 --> 01:03:53.089  
Yes, we are. We are the furthest Western tribe in the United States. It costs us, just to get to Anchorage, it's 2,800 dollars round trip, and we have flights three times a week. Yeah, we are way out there.
- Adam Geisler 01:03:58.020 --> 01:04:02.300  
Gotcha. And what's your proximity to Unalaska?
- James Stevens 01:04:02.390 --> 01:04:04.230  
Three hundred miles away. Yeah, and that that's going to be the closest fiber node. That's one of them. There's another company that's doing a project from Nome to Homer. We'd rather connect with them because they seem more reasonable in their pricing structures. They're not one of those companies that have been just leaching money from all the communities. It's important that tribes own the middle mile so that we can have the anchor tenants like the schools and the clinics. That's why it's important for tribes and local governments to own that middle mile. Now, we do not need these outside Internet service providers to come in and just take our money and deliver poor service.
- Adam Geisler 01:04:50.150 --> 01:05:08.229  
You raise I think, a really, you've raised a lot of really good points, and I guess first off, I just want to acknowledge one. Thank you for delivering the feedback on your half of the village. The, you just raised a very real reality, which is sometimes people have to delegate the authority, because they just don't have the access to be able to show up and do it over these platforms. So, I appreciate you carrying the message on behalf of the leadership there. I hear you. You don't have broadband, and I just want to make sure I captured the points here. You're currently looking at a temporary solution waiting on equipment.
- 01:05:26.660 --> 01:05:44.190  
The five hundred thousand, I want to point out that the up to five hundred thousand equitable distribution, is it can be used for more than just last mile to be used for a whole host of things that, but I will say the caveat is, we have to keep it within the parameters of what was in the original application. That's the nuance that the lawyers have kept me to, but I recognize that thirty million dollar cost is a

real real cost, and it's not just the cost of getting the service there. What I'm hearing you say it's the cost of paying for it in general. I just came back from, from a trip with Assistant Secretary Davidson. We were up in Tanana. We went out to Kodiak, we went over to the Bethel region and up and down the river out there, and I can, and I really can truly appreciate the challenges that you guys are facing, and from an affordability standpoint, I mean, as you mentioned, even after subsidies eight hundred, I saw \$1800 a month bill from some of the households in the Bethel region that made me fall out of my chair a little bit. And so, those are the realities that you're facing. So, I hear you on the cost component. So, it brings me to ask you a couple questions.

01:06:44.950 --> 01:07:03.000

Should we be looking at affordability as a prioritization in in this process? And then also, should we be giving preference to applicants that where there is tribal ownership in this, so: not just where they're contracting out to somebody, but where there is a true partnership, or where they're doing it on their own, so that there is a benefit. Do you believe that we should be looking at prioritizing in that fashion?

James Stevens

01:07:14.580 --> 01:07:16.880

Thanks for pitching the softball. Yes, I think prior prioritization should be made when, for tribal ISP's, tribally owned ISP's. The second question about affordability. I think affordability, a tribe shouldn't have to document affordability or a plan for making it affordable. I think the recognition should be that a tribally owned ISP would provide the services to the schools and clinics in the communities which would cover your basic operating costs, including your connectivity to the, to the fiber nodes. And then, I mean I was setting up, I was setting up in villages back in the mid 2000s with broadband solutions, and we were happy to get one and a half megs down and half a meg up. We thought we were really cruising along.

01:08:26.810 --> 01:08:42.729

But it's, but the reality is that once you have those anchor tenants like a school or a clinic that covers all your costs, what you charge the individual users, the residential users, to put a bluntly as chump change one, you know, you don't need to charge them that much because you have your anchor tenants. Okay, does that answer to all your questions?

Adam Geisler

01:08:47.870 --> 01:08:49.210

Understood. I think so. I think, I think I hear you a lot more on looking at the prioritizations, and even, and I appreciate you addressing the cost component of that. I mean, that's a big part of sustainability is another area that we've looked at for prioritization. And really what I'm hearing you highlight there is the sustainability component of this, that giving preference to those that can give a true demonstration, maybe not affordability, but demonstrated through sustainability and a continuance in that practice. Is there anything else you wanted to add before we continue to move on, Mr. Stevens?

James Stevens

01:09:28.240 --> 01:09:33.690

No, thank you very much for this opportunity to speak and answer questions.

Adam Geisler

01:09:33.700 --> 01:09:39.839

Thank you. I appreciate it and thank you to the native village of Atka for joining us today. Appreciate that. Okay, Matt, how are we doing?

Matt Rogotzke

01:09:43.260 --> 01:09:53.890

No one new in the chat, but I don't know, Adam. If it'd be worthwhile to mention our middle mile program for a second, since I feel like that was relevant to the last conversation.

Adam Geisler

01:09:53.899 --> 01:10:12.609

Yeah, good point. So, we have, I guess, for everybody on the line there's, there's a few different programs in addition to the TBCP, where direct funding is available to tribes as well. There is the middle mile program at NTIA, and the window is actually closing I think, at the end of the month, if not in the next week or two, so it's a pretty tight turnaround, but many of you have already have a straw man of the application.

01:10:22.420 --> 01:10:43.119

So, I do want to point out there's an opportunity there. Also, that in addition to the tribal broadband program, there is what's called the BEAD program. And if you guys are attending the Department of Interior broadband summit, we did an overview of the program, but essentially, it's 42.5 billion dollars that is going out to the States, and that it is not direct funding to tribes from the Federal Government. But the States can fund tribes directly, and we're requiring every State to address how they intend to connect and are asking them to connect every unserved household in the country, and that includes on tribal lands, and that also means that there is tribal consent.

01:11:08.090 --> 01:11:24.419

And so, for my friends on the line here in Alaska, I really hope in addition to this program, you are digging in deep with the Governor's office in the State of Alaska and the team that is there, and for my colleagues and relations in the Lower Forty-Eight, I also would suggest the same thing. That there is obviously direct funding is always the best approach. Again, former tribal leader I always wanted the money direct from the Federal Government. That is always the best approach in maintaining that relationship.

01:11:40.590 --> 01:11:54.510

However, again, what the Government did here was, they put the dollars into the State and are requiring them to have a plan, and tribes are supposed to be included in that plan, and tribes are supposed to consent to how they're going to be served in that plan. So, there's another pot of money out there in addition to this, that I, you know, I'm happy to share. In fact, we're going to be standing up a tribal broadband leaders' network that, as Mr. Matt Rogotzke, as you see on here, will be helping

facilitate that where we can share more information about who your respective point of contact would be in your neighboring state. So again, there's other pots. I appreciate you raising that Matt. And with that we'll go ahead and jump into the next.

Matt Rogotzke

01:12:19.440 --> 01:12:34.689

Actually, it looks like we got a couple of new hand raises from Lisa Sutherland was up, and then Councilmember Joe Garcia is back up again. So, let me hear from Lisa first.

Adam Geisler

01:12:47.520 --> 01:12:50.190

All right, Lisa.

Carole Garner- Production:

01:12:52.860 --> 01:12:55.000

Lisa, you can unmute.

Lisa Sutherland

01:12:57.300 --> 01:12:58.620

All right, okay. My name is Lisa Sutherland. I work with the Alaska Federation of Natives, and we earlier submitted a consortium application, and I am the lead Federal navigator, and also a telecommunications lawyer. I had two questions. One is in terms of, in reading through the dear tribal leader letter, and it said twenty five percent of tribes had not applied.

01:13:33.340 --> 01:13:44.590

Would you consider publishing a list as part of your NOFO of the tribes that did not apply, because we've had so much turnover among our tribal administrators. Honestly, there's a lot of people who don't know what they applied for, and there are just so many grant opportunities. So, I think that might be helpful for tribes, and maybe even for you. If you are going to prioritize those tribes who did not apply during the first round.

01:14:02.140 --> 01:14:18.219

And then secondly, and I'm, I know you're aware of this, and we're not necessarily saying that this should be a priority. But you might consider calling out in the NOFO the new opportunity that tribes have for tribal libraries. After the first NOFO finished up September 1<sup>st</sup> of last year in January. I believe it was January 27th, or something like that. The FCC ruled that tribal tribes can have tribal libraries that are paid for with USF funds up to ninety percent of their broadband costs. So, if there could be some consideration given to help tribes. We have of our two hundred and twenty-nine tribes. We have fifty, only fifty-six have tribal libraries, and only four until recently had the e-rate program which paid for their broadband. And if you can get in that program, it's, it goes on forever. It's not funded through the appropriations process, and you also get twenty-five thousand dollars for equipment. So, if we could do that, at least in Alaska, I don't know there might be lower forty-eight tribes already have tribal libraries, but every single one of them could have a computer center. They could have zoom rooms to do calls, to do classes, to do work from home, all kinds of things. Until we can get this infrastructure built which is going to take, you know, a number of years, so I hope

that might be something. And then, the other thing is even to sign up for the E-rate program.

01:15:44.790 --> 01:16:02.970

I worked for the Member of Congress, Senator Stevens who wrote the E-rate program, and I couldn't even figure out how to do an application for AFN, and not to say that I'm the brightest bulb in the pack. But if a telecommunication lawyer can hardly figure it out, it's hard for tribes to do. We have one E-rate coordinator in Alaska who does all our schools and all our other libraries. She has helped a couple tribal libraries, so if we could get one or two people who could help tribes take advantage of this opportunity, it becomes self-sustaining. So, I hope as you're considering how you're going to structure your NOFO, you will give some thought to how tribal libraries can be incorporated. And then, there's also separate money that funds the tribal library through other agencies. So that was all I wanted to share.

Adam Geisler

01:16:36.490 --> 01:16:52.690

No, I think, at least I appreciate the feedback. And that's a good point of consideration, and prioritization is that library, I think, even as we just heard from the village of Atka that can serve as a, what was the term that the gentleman used, Mr. Steven used, anchor tenant, I think, is how I described it.

Lisa Sutherland

Hundred percent, one hundred percent, because then they get all that money coming in, even if it takes some time to try to get the schools and libraries. They can get an anchor tenant through the library, and it's exclusively a tribal library. So, by definition, it's, you know it's theirs. They pick the vendor, even if they can pick themselves as the vendor.

Adam Geisler

So I don't know. And again, this will be some things we have to think about internally with the team, but I think that there's a big difference, I imagine, an E-Rate funding subsidies for Alaska connectivity as opposed to lower forty-eight. So, it makes me think about, maybe a customization approach for Alaskan applicants that that be a component. And I didn't realize it was only 56 of the of the over two hundred Federally recognized tribes in Alaska. So that's a, that's a...

Lisa Sutherland

01:17:54.500 --> 01:18:13.340

Well, they have tribal libraries, but only four have signed up for the E-rate program, because it was two day and hard and now, they're finally eligible, but that your eligibility for E-rate depends on your uptake for the school lunch program. So, if you're on a reservation, and you have high use of the of the school lunch program, you're going to get closer to that. Ninety percent, and most of our tribes are in the eighty to ninety percent category.

Adam Geisler

01:18:24.420 --> 01:18:25.290

All right. Well, I appreciate the feedback and thank you for, I think, putting a component on the table in terms of prioritization, especially from the Alaskan lens. That makes a lot of sense. And then your question about publishing a list of those who didn't apply. I don't know that we'll be, I can understand why you're asking it. I appreciate it.

Lisa Sutherland

You want to help those who didn't apply to do it.

Yeah, you don't want to leave any money on the table, and I should say we are absolutely intending for those that didn't apply or didn't receive the up to five hundred thousand. We're absolutely intending to keep that in the next round, and you don't want to leave money on the table. I need to see, I need to see, I don't, I don't know the answer to it. But I think that's something worth considering

Lisa Sutherland

Or maybe even doing outreach. If you guys, did I? I can understand it. You might try. Some might not like that information in public, but you could, if you guys could let them know. Hey, you're eligible for this, you know, if you want help. And even if you wanted to say if it's available, if you'd like to work with them to help you and get up to speed on this program, and help you apply. So, that would be another option.

Adam Geisler

01:19:38.080 --> 01:19:40.389

Okay, alright, thank you. I appreciate the feedback, Lisa, and thank you so much for joining us. Thank you to AFN for joining us today.

Lisa Sutherland

01:19:45.900 --> 01:19:48.490

Yeah, and this will be in our written comments, by the way.

Adam Geisler

01:19:48.500 --> 01:19:49.290

Okay, wonderful. Thank you. And I guess I should also just state for the record. We just have a working knowledge. AFN does have authorization to speak on behalf of number of villages that they are currently working with and representing in the TBCP program. In case any of you are wondering. Okay, Alaska Federation of Natives. So, with that being said, we have it looks like one more speaker in the box, is it Mr. Garcia?

Matt Rogotzke

Actually two. Now, Mr. Garcia and then Mr. Joe Williams is after that.

Adam Geisler

Mr. Garcia, I think you can come off from mute.

Joe Garcia

01:20:33.080 --> 01:20:49.089

Yeah, I finally got the logistics of how you get online by quick got to switch as a guest, I guess. Anyway, thank you for the time. I just wanted to allude the people that are speaking about the middle mile. I heard some good comments from Alaska about, they wanted to do the Middle Mile and I'll tell you from experience that northern New Mexico engaged in a Middle Mile project during the ARRA funding under President Obama. The project was a success. It's still successful and we're running off a part of that as we're connecting to the last mile, but the last small part are important, and so I want to send a warning out to people that want to own their own middle mile that right now we're only talking about the infrastructure funding.

01:21:36.300 --> 01:21:54.020

We're not talking about anything else. I don't believe because you have to have that middle mile. So, the last mile doesn't make any sense, unless you have a middle mile where you have an interim like the satellite part that they were talking about, but in terms of doing the infrastructure, everyone has talked about infrastructure, and so in in the infrastructure, in the broadband affordability number one, you have to have the development design part of it. You had to have the engineering design for the middle mile. You have to have the design for the last mile, and then once you've got the system set up, whether it be fiber, Wi-fi, whatever it is, you have to go into operations. Now, we've not even talked about operations folks. So, when you talk about okay, we've got the middle mile now done, and who built it? Who owns it? Who's going to operate it? And where are you going to get the operational funds? It's the same with the with the last mile providers. The tribe can do the last miles themselves if they had the personnel, but they have to be funded. Those personnel have to be funded. If they don't have the funds to support IT, then you're kind of stuck with the infrastructure. Nobody runs it. So, it's kind of the all-around look that that I'm looking, and I think many, many tribes aren't considering that they're just laying one piece of the infrastructure, and they need to worry about the entire train to be connected to some point in Alaska that provides the fiber. And I think I heard a thirty million dollar cost for laying fiber from in northern New Mexico. We're talking about expanding some fiber for the middle mile.

01:23:33.960 --> 01:23:38.230

We're talking about like 275 thousand dollars a mile. If you got 300 miles to go, and the cost is probably higher up in Alaska. If I could say double the price, then we've got some problems. So that middle mile is going to be like, it's pie in the sky, and I don't know if it's doable so. But, in understanding for the tribal leaders that are online for others, I think it's important to consider all those elements that I just let out. So, thank you for the time.

Adam Geisler

01:24:12.080 --> 01:24:31.439

Thank you, Councilman. You know, appreciate, there are a lot of experiences there in lessons learned. I think that Councilman just shared right in terms of thinking about it. If you're going to take on that operation of maintenance component of that, how are you going to do that. And really making sure, I think we're back to that sustainability prioritization. So, I appreciate that Council Member.

01:24:36.120 --> 01:24:48.389

Okay, well, let's, we have a few more minutes here, and we're spending some time on this, because I think prioritization is a big deal with this remaining billion dollars. So, I really do want to appreciate and acknowledge all of the feedback that we've heard so far today, a lot of good pieces to think about, and we have, I think, one more speaker or two more.

Matt Rogotzke

01:25:02.400 --> 01:25:03.490

Yep. Two more. Yeah, Joe Williams, and then Nate Tyler after that.

Adam Geisler

01:25:07.000 --> 01:25:11.760

Okay. And then, and then from there we're going to move on into the second question. So, with that, Joe Williams. Joe, I think you should be able to come off mute.

Joe Williams 01:25:25.630 --> 01:25:27.440  
Good morning. I'm sorry. Is it good now?

Adam Geisler You're good now, name, title of the tribe that you were speaking on behalf of, please.

Joe Williams 01:25:37.670 --> 01:25:38.940  
My name is Joe Williams, Jr. and the president of the organized village of Saksman, which is a federally recognized tribe. How that's being said here today, I'm very brand new to this process, and I would like I could gather by this call, and I appreciate you putting it on. So, the young lady from AFN that had some guidance in how to be able to apply for that. I certainly would appreciate it. That's all I have, Mr. Chairman.

Adam Geisler 01:26:25.140 --> 01:26:29.059  
Thank you so much President Williams for providing the comment. And you know one thing that I, for the team, President, if you don't mind putting your contact information in the chat box. I also think we have it on the back end. I think we can get you the information and tied in with the FCC and the e-rate program that Miss Sutherland was speaking to and Lisa. I imagine you'd be able to reach out. I know you're pretty knowledgeable in the space, if that's something I know AFN is a great partner up there, and I imagine you'd be happy to do that as well. But, President Williams, our team will be following up with you to do a hand off with our sister Federal agency over at the FCC. And thank you for joining us today. All right, we have next, was it?

Matt Rogotzke 01:27:10.520 --> 01:27:18.049  
Nate Tyler.

Adam Geisler 01:27:24.000 --> 01:27:26.339  
Nate Tyler. All right, wonderful! We'll just give it a second here, is Nate Tyler off of mute?

Carole Garner- Production 01:27:41.560 --> 01:27:43.609  
He's coming in.

Nate Tyler 01:27:44.810 --> 01:28:03.250  
Adam, can you hear me? There we go, All right. I didn't have. I didn't have anything on mute or anything. So, I was just added as a panelist. I appreciate this, Adam. Nate Tyler, I'm the treasurer of the Makah tribe in Washington State. I'm requesting to just make a handful of comments right now. I'm one of two Council members right now meet with the Washington State Governor and some of his top staff. So, I got to get back into my meeting, so if I can, I can just make a handful of comments. I'd appreciate that, Adam.

01:28:24.570 --> 01:28:27.240

Okay. So yeah, thanks a lot for, you know, allowing that, I guess you know my topics that I want to discuss or bring forward. I guess equality or inequality. It's something that we face as tribes across the board when it when it comes to, you know, funding or funding mechanisms, or whatever the case, pass through monies, state monies intended for tribes, but just to have a fair playing field, I think, for all tribes throughout the U.S..

01:29:02.610 --> 01:29:06.329

You know a lot of the smaller tribes miss out any kind of opportunities, for whatever reason they don't have the staff, the resources, or whatever the case is, and it reflects back to who's been funded. Who's been funded, so I'd like to, you know, see moving forward, you know, working together, trying to figure out how we can best utilize this funding, get the money out to the tribes as fast as we can, and to have a fair system in place that benefits all tribes prioritized in the equitable distribution towards the towards all the recipients. It is my first point, prioritizing those who were not funded in round one. Separate the larger tribes from the smaller tribes ensuring the comparison is equitable.

01:30:09.970 --> 01:30:11.219

Like I said, it's kind of unfair for a lot of the smaller tribes. We see this across the board Adam, not just in this, in this case, but we see it in the healthcare field. We see it I mean everything. Law enforcement, you name it. So, it's, it really is unfair, you know, towards the smaller tribes competing against larger tribes. I don't know what the answer is, but you know, it'd be nice to work together, you know, to come up with some solutions on how that can be done. Advocate for exemption from a Build America Buy America requirement. The, the supply chains already choked, and watch the needed equipment imported. Now that was one of my biggest fears when this was coming down the pipeline. You know all this money. There's a lot of money, but there's not enough money. But even though all this money's coming down the pipelines, you know, knowing that supply chain, what it's going to do to supply chain, it's going to be our finding, it's going to be hard, harder moving forward.

01:31:34.230 --> 01:31:45.559

You know, as far as you know, contractors and supplies and all that. So, I think we've got to think about that. That was my one of my biggest fears right off the bat, like I said, when this came down the pipeline. Prioritize infrastructure projects over use of adoption projects, adoption projects. Do not prioritize higher network speeds. Once again this puts the larger tribes who are in a position wherever they're at regionally closer to urban areas the existing infrastructure of a middle mile. Rural, remote tribes don't have that same access, and especially here at Makah. You know, we're about as remote as you can get. We've been working on this issue for quite a few years now, and we're still coming across barriers. We're still in a position where we don't have equitable access to internet, basic utilities. So, I think you know just the point of this funding, you know, really should be the level of playing field, you know, and we have a number of tribes up and down the coast that's in the same position as the Makah tribe. We have a number of times on the east side of the mountains in

Washington State. That's in the same position as Makah tribes that's known. But just the, you know level that playing field so, you know, at a certain point, you know, we're all doing exactly what this program's intent was set up to do.

01:33:29.920 --> 01:33:36.540

And having the access, whether it's an education or the health field mental health, telehealth. So, I think that's really important. Technical assistance. And here NTIA should work with applicants on mapping, you know, and possibly providing map and workshops to create shape files which would increase the applicant's capacity. So, but once again, I just appreciate this opportunity to provide some comments through this platform, and the Makah tribe will follow up with a written comment soon. So, once again, just appreciate it, Adam. Thank you.

Adam Geisler

01:34:16.790 --> 01:34:46.230

Absolutely, Treasurer Tyler. Thank you, and thank you to the Makah tribe for being here, and best wishes on your meeting with the Governor. Real quick, I just want to make sure that I captured everything, and if I miss anything or you need to correct it, just let me know. I think the first thing you brought up was making sure that we come up with a way that this is equitable where the funding mechanism isn't destructive to tribes that may be smaller. Whether it be population or land based, you still would like to also see things moving quickly, and in that same vein, giving priority to those that applied essentially in round one that have received, or will be receiving, the five hundred thousand, or maybe weren't funded, but applied. We have talked about, I'll just share with you and I and I heard you share this, we have talked about looking at, separating a bucket of money for the larger tribes and the smaller tribes because there really are just different dynamics involved in that. We've even talked about having an Alaskan pot of money, because everything is just so different in Alaska. So, I hear you there. I think we'll explore to see if there's a way to do it equitably. I'll be honest, a former tribal leader myself, I don't think I've seen any agency truly hit a home run on how to really address it. But I'm game to try it. And we'll see if there's something else, we can augment here on. Exemption from the Build America Buy America. I heard you loud, clear there, but I appreciate you sharing that sentiment. To be candid, we've heard that from all three consultations. Now we're going to probably hear it when we get to those other questions later on. But you're saying that the tribe should be exempt mainly because the supply chain issues haven't caught up.

01:36:01.700 --> 01:36:14.809

And then, the other piece that you left was prioritizing infrastructure over broadband use and adoption, and I appreciate you raising, just giving that guidance. But that is another thing the team has really debated is and we wanted to consult on the topic. First, you know, should there be priorities? We've heard others say, infrastructure is the priority right now. You know, the use and adoption activities are great, but when so many people can't get online, how do you, how do you hand out funds to do broadband use adoption activities over that?

01:36:35.930 --> 01:36:54.299

So, I think we'll have to chat with our lawyers honestly about about that topic. But I do believe that that's definitely on the table. So, thank you for sharing. And then, hear you loud and clear that the program rules is to level of playing field. That's right. It's to try to deliver this program in a way that's equitable to connect unserved households. There's no easy task and lastly, I appreciate the guidance on the workshops, for mapping, and for the rest of you. We're going to get into this question, and again, and I know Treasurer Tyler has to run. We are going to be talking about that in a moment. Is increasing more detailed maps we have to use those maps to review for duplication with our other Federal agencies, and sometimes folks are sending in pictures, JPEGs, or PDFs, and we need the more intelligent files to be able to interact with other software program that we use. So, I appreciate the feedback on saying that we could use this as capacity-building activity given the larger window. So, is there anything else that you wanted to add Treasurer Tyler that I may have missed or misunderstood?

Nate Tyler

01:37:42.810 --> 01:37:54.529

No, I don't have anything more to add. Just you know I appreciate everything you've been doing up to this point. I know your guy's jobs are pretty tough, you know. You guys get beat up quite a bit, and your staff get beat up over what you guys been doing, you know. But I fully understand we're working with what we have. So, I do appreciate your staff and everything you guys have done so, and once again, just appreciate you letting me hop on and express my concerns and comment here, so thank you.

Adam Geisler

01:38:17.750 --> 01:38:27.250

Absolutely, I appreciate the feedback on the team. I know they'll appreciate the support. So, thank you so much for being here today Treasurer Tyler and the Makah tribe. All right. Well, Matt, I don't think anybody else popped up in the queue. So, we are going to run on to question number two.

Matt Rogotzke

01:38:30.630 --> 01:38:37.850

You got it.

Adam Geisler

01:38:40.070 --> 01:38:54.350

That was a pretty good, it was a pretty good question, number one. But hey, that's the meat and potatoes, right. Some of these other questions, I think, are just as important. But that priority discussion really matters. I mean, our team has really been talking about how we best approach. You know the landscape that we're working in for this next billion. So, thank you to everybody that provided a comment for question one and any of you that are submitting feedback in a written format. Thank you again.

01:39:08.730 --> 01:39:10.750

Okay. So, what type of guidance or documentation can be included in addition to the NOFO that would assist applicants in completing their application. So, one of the things that we've talked about is, we weren't able to get it done in through clearance before releasing the last NOFO. But we would like to have sample application materials. Right? How do you? Here's a sample 424 form. Here's a

sample budget narrative. Are there are other types of materials that would be helpful that we should be including in this next NOFO. Also, are there things that need to be more clear? I'll just share with you. Others have previously shared with us that it would be good to have more concise definitions regarding different aspects of the NOFO, which is fair. Again, this is really meant to understand. You know, are there things that we need to do with the NOFO, or additional resources or documentation that we should be including in this next round to improve.

01:40:20.320 --> 01:40:25.730

Lastly, this is also in relationship to that mapping discussion. We are, we are thinking about adding, since it's a six-month window, you know, should we be considering requiring, and I guess I use the word requiring that more detailed shapefile, and ESRI shape file. Or there's a couple of other formats, but essentially a little bit more than a standard PDF when we're talking about network diagrams that folks are submitting? And do you believe that that would be a burden if we were to do so? Or do you believe that that's something that would be coachable, and that and our team, by the way, stands ready to help due to that education and capacity building. I loved how Treasurer Tyler put that forward. You know, our team is here to build capacity with you, and so there, so that that's question number two: what type of guidance or documentations can be included in addition to the NOFO, or within the NOFO to assist applicants in completing their application. So that is the question we have. We have, it looks like Councilman Garcia in the queue.

Matt Rogotzke

01:41:36.200 --> 01:41:45.520

We'll get him off mute, and then we'll track others as they make their way into the queue with their hands up.

Adam Geisler

01:41:45.860 --> 01:41:47.429

Sounds good. Councilman Garcia.

Joe Garcia

01:41:51.050 --> 01:41:53.320

Thank you, Adam. I've been promoted. Yeah, Joe Garcia, Head Councilman. Ohkay, Owingeh. Ah, first and foremost, I think that dependent on who the tribe is, it's important to understand? Is the, is the application sent by a grant writer, or is it sent by a committee within the tribe, or just sent by IT people, or maybe an engineering firm? It's hard to understand what the need might be depending on where the tribes are coming from. And, as I said before, it's not just the infrastructure, it's all the elements that make, from the hot point in a city all the way down to the last user at the tribal level. And I heard the young lady speak about the library forms, and I don't remember her saying anything about that there was already a middle mile for library rates, e-rates, and if you don't have that connection, e-rate is kind of useless. And so, I think some of the more remote areas, they may have a library, but they have no connectivity. And so, I think those kinds of guidance's are important. And how do you get that to be a universal approach to the tribes that are lacking those resources.

01:43:31.330 --> 01:43:38.789

So, the question becomes okay, if I'm a tribal member and I know a little bit about IT, even though you might do a webinar on what it takes to develop from the, from the city point to the last mile, the last house, and you provide the webinar via electronic through Internet, if I don't have Internet how am I gonna know? How am I going to get connected to these kinds of webinars. And I believe that some of the tribes are in that very same boat. That's why, Adam I said, I feel for those tribes that did not submit any application. And they're probably in this boat that I'm talking about. And so, when we're talking about equity, right, equity, equitable distribution, those tribes are left out completely, and I heard, and they talk about, even though they're not completely remote, because he was able to zoom in on this session. He cited that some of the, the tribes themselves are in that boat, and so how do we get that across would be an important thing.

01:44:58.240 --> 01:45:15.539

But, that kind of guidance, I think, is important. And even when you distribute it online, if you send a dear tribal letter to, but via email to a tribal leader in a remote area that doesn't really have Internet, complete Internet, you've done missed the boat because that tribe will not hear that unless you send it snail mail. I don't remember how long it takes now for snail mail, but it well over a week depending on where you are. And so, by the time everything kind of gets through, and when people learn about this, it's almost like, you know, if you're going to take physics with calculus, you better have had calculus one before you go into physics with calculus. The preliminary thing, I think the prerequisite to know about what is required for Internet and broadband, they are prerequisites. And unless you know what is okay to develop a complete working good. It's not going to happen. And we're still fighting that part. And I, you know I sort of going through and developing a course to do that. I think that's what the guidelines should provide.

01:46:19.180 --> 01:46:38.179

I've worked with the national telecommunication's native task force for communication. We did provide a handbook, and I think some of that handbook is available over at FAA or FFC. I'm sorry, that might help to guide people to looking at what is needed, so that would be additional thing. But it requires a lot of reading, a lot of planning and a lot of developing. And so, spur of the moment. But the last option I would provide is when you have television, let's say Direct TV. How in the world do people know about direct TV? It was out. The infrastructure is already there. It's just the service provided, right? And so, people know about it. So how can we get that same kind of message to the people in need? And I don't know the people that don't have Broadband, and if they have direct TV or satellite TV, or whatever they got, but that might be an approach to getting the information out. So, it's a little bit more work for NTIA to get the message across to everybody that should be submitting.

01:47:39.600 --> 01:47:58.499

But that's just a thing, and the other consideration would be. There are specific pieces that can be developed without a tribe having to do their own design and work. Develop a system, that's already been done. The last mile providers have already designed systems, the kind of equipment the kind of connection, the kind of

power they need, and all of that. It's already been tested, and it worked in all kinds of communities. So why not have that as a sample?

01:48:17.500 --> 01:48:36.990

That's your sample. So, they say to all these things. This is what it would be. And then you don't have to start from scratch in designing it. It's already a done deal. And then, that's how we've worked in the past before, somebody develops the system, and it's this system, it contains these pieces and you just lay it out there and plug it in, and away you go. But the connectivity part is that the last thing that you still have to worry about is, how is it connected to the last mile provider? And how is that last mile provided and connected to the middle mile? It's still the same question about infrastructure development, and all the pieces have to be there. Thank you for the bit of time. Ah, but those are suggestions that I have.

Adam Geisler

01:49:04.860 --> 01:49:15.300

And, Councilman, I think you just, I think there was a lot there, and you know what it does make me stop and pause and think about is the timing of the next NOFO, and what our team can do on the front end before we release the NOFO, so people can really use that six-month window to fine-tune their proposals. And you're right. I think you just laid out a really good example of you're right. Sometimes people think this is rocket science, and it's not rocket science. They just don't know the pieces and where they fit, but they, but I think most people can conceptualize no different than how water comes into your home, or how roads are connected. In a lot of ways that fiber networks or high-speed Internet networks, aren't necessarily conceptually any different. So, what can our team do you made me really think about a few different things here in terms of timing. And then what can our team do ahead of the release of the next NOFO from a planning perspective and from an education perspective to build capacity.

01:50:11.770 --> 01:50:23.619

And not have people recreate the wheel, because I think you're right. The folks that didn't apply, didn't apply for a whole host of reasons. But I can also just assume it was because it wasn't something quick and easy that they could slap together like, maybe on some of the other programs that they're used to working in. So how can we, how can we bridge that gap? A lot to think about there, Head Councilman. And I want to thank you for that feedback. I think that was really insightful and again, highlighting the FCC handbook, we at NTIA also have a toolkit. Maci, do you mind dropping the toolkit in the chat for everybody that's online? We have something similar that walks people through it, still doesn't have the level of detail, Councilman, that I think you are getting at in calling out every aspect of the network in a network diagram that we would want to see. So again, I think just a lot of great words there.

01:51:09.200 --> 01:51:12.179

Anything else you want to add before we move on to the next speaker?

Joe Garcia

01:51:13.190 --> 01:51:29.500

Uh, no, just, it would be nice to, again, you'll send us to know. But those that can't get online won't have that document. Okay. So, I think it for some of us it's the same continued effort for us to close with those tribes that are that are not on this call today. I think I'm the only one from the southwest area, so I will try to send the information as much as I can and it's called, reaching out, so I'll do my part if you guys will do your part. Thank you.

Adam Geisler

01:51:53.950 --> 01:51:57.050

Thank you. Appreciate it, Head Councilman. Thank you all right, Matt. Who do we have next?

Matt Rogotzke

01:52:01.300 --> 01:52:15.700

I saw a Fred McLaughlin, but I think his hands down now, so not sure if he is back up. All right. Fred McLaughlin, we'll get you in the speaking capacity in just a second.

Adam Geisler

01:52:22.930 --> 01:52:24.670

All right, Fred.

Fred McLaughlin

01:52:31.660 --> 01:52:33.459

Can you hear me, okay?

Adam Geisler

01:52:33.470 --> 01:52:39.110

There we go, Mr. McLaughlin, your name, title, and the tribe you are representing today.

Fred McLaughlin

01:52:39.490 --> 01:52:54.110

Hello, good morning or good afternoon. My name is Fred McLaughlin, and I am a general manager for Standing Rock Telecommunications, to which I am a travel member as well. Our company is owned and operated by the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

One hundred percent owned by it, and they've been an operation since 2009 as a wireless provider with the FCC. So, we are able to receive programs such as lifeline and a high-cost support and such things that so throw up first thing is, thank you for allowing me to talk. Thank you President for an indication earlier. Really, it comes down to literacy and tribes, and such like that, because not a lot of tribes know exactly what broadband, the title of broadband, and all that it encompasses with it.

01:53:47.200 --> 01:54:05.180

For example, our sister tribe, Cheyenne River Sioux tribe in Eagle Butte, South Dakota. They are a wireline company that they do broadband. We're a wireless company that has broadband, so it's very, very different for each tribe. And obviously that echoes the needs as well. I just kind of wanted to comment out there that the FCC does have an ONAP office, office of native American programming and policy. I know that there are, they have tools as well and like you said, and you know, the FCC just finished doing a broadband collection map in which every broadband provider had to show exactly what services they provided, and the

mapping of where they provided that, so I don't know when that will be completed and compiled. I know there are some companies out there that are still submitting their data, but I expect that to be sometime soon. So, for those tribes that want to talk about mapping and different things like that about what's all there, and I think, I think that that is a helpful tool here, soon to be published that tribes can look at it with the FCC.

01:55:13.520 --> 01:55:18.259

And I just like to thank you for the time, and I like to, kind of echo, the words of a previous speaker, a compliment from us. I forget the name of the tribe. But I just thought that the needs are very different for each tribe, and I think you guys did a good job for the first one. My first man did a good job, and I to leave it vague is hard to do. And tribes have a specific need, but I think a little bit more resources and stuff like that as this is needed. You know, there's only so much you can do with what's out there as is right now. So, thanks. I appreciate your time and encourage everybody to keep going.

Adam Geisler

01:56:04.620 --> 01:56:09.289

Appreciate that, Mr. McLaughlin, and thank you to the Cheyenne Sioux River Tribe for joining us today, and of the work you guys are doing some impressive stuff out there, definitely a leader in the broadband space. Some of you will start to also hear the term high speed Internet being used in lieu of broadband, the way it was described by the administration. And I think it's fair is we all have kids. And sometimes when the Internet goes out, if you don't have Internet at all. But the kids, maybe they have it at school they don't say, oh, we lost our broadband. They say the Internet isn't working, and I notice that even with my own children, I have a microwave service that serves my home and a wireless service, and that's exactly how they describe it. They don't say, Dad, the broadband went out. So to your point, Mr. McLaughlin, this is education around the terms of the space, and providing a level of education to improve the literacy, I think, of all tribal nations, because it's in many ways it really is. It's vernacular. I think the concepts here are absolutely teachable, coachable, learnable. Tribes are already doing these things. It's the terms that we need to help with.

01:57:24.680 --> 01:57:36.039

So, I think I'm just continuing to hear more and more on this topic that the need for continuing education in the lead up to, or educational materials during the next round separate and apart from the NOFO, maybe not as attached to the NOFO, to really level set is something that we need to do, and that, I think, also gets us into the next question. If there isn't anybody else in the queue, Matt?

01:57:50.880 --> 01:58:03.999

We'll go on to the next slide, because I think we're right on topic with the next question, which has to do with technical assistance. And how can we provide better technical assistance to improve timely and complete submissions? Now, again round one, we had ninety days to frankly educate everybody. We had a new team. We had new applicants. We had a new rule from the NOFO with a new program,

with new funding, all happening in the middle of a pandemic. And with this round we have a little bit more time.

01:58:30.340 --> 01:58:46.220

We have a six-month window as opposed to a ninety-day shot clock. Now I will say that in that six-month timeframe some of the things we've been talking about, because there will be the opportunity to provide more technical assistance is tightening up on the application a little bit more. So, we're not so broad, right. I think we cast a very wide net, which resulted in a lot of curing. If I'm just going to be honest here, which I think was appropriate. We needed to do, the law asks us to do, but in the same vein we also know that, that impacted timelines, and there was frustration from many of you about how long this program has taken to get dollars on the street. And so, that's what this question is really intended to tackle is, is, what are things that we can do from a technical assistance standpoint? And I think we just heard a couple.

01:59:23.690 --> 01:59:37.749

But if there's other ideas as well, we'd love to hear them to ensure not just a timely submission, but that the application is complete in a way that will lessen the curing on the back end, so we can get the dollars out faster. So, are there any other ideas, foods for thought around how we can improve. I've heard mapping was brought up by the Treasurer from Makah, doing mapping workshops and building capacity. I think we definitely heard that there's a need to ensure that the way we deliver technical assistance. Zoom isn't going to cut it. I think Head Councilman Garcia has made that very clear. Many tribes are still operating on as he, as he shared, snail mail, which means that maybe our technical assistance in some regions is barely going to have to be boots on the ground and bush planes and boats, and that may be the case. I think we also heard the need to, how we can also work with our sister agencies, with their resources in tandem, to help build that capacity in preparation. So, I guess I really am wondering. Are there things that we can improve upon, or other ideas that you may have that fit your respective communities in the way that you learn, or the way in which we can help from a technical assistance standpoint on the next application, where maybe boots on the ground, or more engagement would have been helpful? So that is the question: How can we help?

02:00:55.490 --> 02:01:00.249

How can technical assistance from NTIA be improved to ensure timely and complete submissions? So, how are we doing, Matt? Anybody in the queue?

Matt Rogotzke

02:01:03.900 --> 02:01:10.130

Not yet. But yeah, can let folks think about it for a sec.

Adam Geisler

02:01:10.140 --> 02:01:27.159

Okay, while we're waiting for hands to come into the queue and that's okay. I did see that there were a few questions that were posed as well. The first one was the for NT Robert Beaver and NTBG Opportunity, due 10/17 under feasibility. So, your environmental survey, is NEPA allowable. Robert, if you don't mind just shooting the team an email, I think what we'd like to do is follow up with you to understand more

of the details around the specific program that you're speaking to so we can get you in touch with the right program team. We do, we at NTIA, the tribal broadband program have nothing due on October 17th.

02:01:56.070 --> 02:02:20.720

That's a separate program I think what you're referencing. I just want to make sure we get the details. So, if you don't mind putting your contact information in the chat, we'll follow up with you afterwards.

Trent Larson asked; are awards granted during the six-month window? For all awards granted after the six-month filing. That's a good question. We had some tribes previously, say, Hey for TBCP, if we get our application in the moment the window opens, you know, or in the first week or so, can you award based upon who submits first, and the answer is, no. We have to wait for that full six-month window to close until we're able to then engage in making any type of awards. We have to close the application window. So, unfortunately, we are not able to make awards on a first come first, I shouldn't say unfortunately, the way the program works. We're not able to make awards on a first-come first-serve basis, so hopefully that was helpful for Mr. Larson.

02:02:55.440 --> 02:03:23.629

Tori Castleberry asked for tribes applying for funding in the second round of TBCP get priority preference if they did not receive funding, and or the five hundred thousand minimum in the first round. I'm going to answer your question with the question, which is, do you believe that that tribe should? I think we definitely heard feedback there. Tori, feel free to, if you'd like to send in written comments on what you believe you'd like, that's really what this session is about is for you to tell us your position, and what is most advantageous for your tribe, or for all tribes, for that matter.

02:03:35.520 --> 02:03:54.469

Brittany Wind, many tribes put a lot of work into round one application cycle for TBCP. While we are waiting for pending awards, denials, or answers on who the additional funds will be handed by NTIA, would it be best practice to continue applying through other funding sources available, such as the Middle Mile program or RUS, et cetera. Yes, so I realize that there is an expense, and I do want to just acknowledge that I don't want to sound flippant when I say, please apply for everything. But I am going to say that if broadband is your priority, which I believe many of you on this call it one hundred percent it is. There, this is an unprecedented time in our country's history, where this level of investment is being made into infrastructure, critical infrastructure, and in particular, obviously broadband or high-speed Internet. And so, I'm going to encourage you to apply.

02:04:31.760 --> 02:04:49.790

Again, recognizing that there is an expense and a time and a capital component to this. But I am going to encourage you to apply for everything that is out there. Let us at the Government sort out on the back end. If there is duplication or issues that we need to work through, which we do. We meet with the FCC, the USDA, and even

Treasury on, at a minimum once a week to be talking about projects, programs, and potential duplication. So, if you're worried, hey, you know what happens. What happens is we'll come talk to you if you're awarded through both programs, and we'll figure out what makes the most sense for you.

02:05:09.560 --> 02:05:27.409

And again, I don't want to overly speak for my colleagues at the other agencies. But the working relationship that we have on ensuring non-duplication and maximizing the benefit to tribes has been very intentional, and I think everybody has been, has been very honest and forthright in their approach to do what's right for any and country in this process.

02:05:31.490 --> 02:05:34.959

All right. So, Matt, any hands up in the queue?

Matt Rogotzke

02:05:34.970 --> 02:05:35.590

Not yet. Maybe perhaps covered a lot in the first couple of sessions.

Adam Geisler

02:05:40.300 --> 02:05:45.379

I think so. I think so. And that's okay. So, I you know, if I'll just say, you know, going once, going twice, and then three times. Okay, you know again, feel free to send in any written comment. If you, if you believe that there's additional technical assistance items, I can tell you we're going to continue to proceed. I want to augment some things based on the feedback we have here today, but we are going to continue to work through your national organizations, your regional organizations, the AFN's, the USET's, the ATNI's, the InterTribal Councils of Arizona, Nevada, Tribal Chairman's Association of California, UTTC, et cetera. We're going to keep leveraging those resources or relationships. And then also your respective BIA regional offices to provide additional information.

02:06:31.370 --> 02:06:49.300

And then again, I do want to highlight that we are going to be announcing a tribal broadband leaders' network which is going to be a monthly forum to continue to share information about not only NTIA's programs or other programs, and I just want to acknowledge one thing we heard from tribes, and I agree. Part of it was capacity and our ability to be more responsive to be candid. But we need to improve. I did hear this previously about information sharing and updates to the program as we've run into different nuanced roadblocks in process. And so, the goal of the tribal broadband leaders' network is to provide that monthly check in. So, if there are questions, or if we need to provide an update on that, we can do that. It's also going to be to share best practices.

02:07:21.970 --> 02:07:34.979

There's a lot of you doing great work. We at the Government want to promote you doing great work. There's no need for you to sit and hear us talk any more than what we have today. We really want others to learn from each other in leveraging that as a resource. Okay. So, I think we're going to move on to the last question, and I am really going to. I'm not going to move quickly past this last one, because it's an

important one. A number of you have raised concerns about supply chain issues as a whole, and the bipartisan infrastructure law, also known as the IJA.

02:07:59.100 --> 02:08:14.100

There was a provision in the bipartisan infrastructure law that added two billion dollars to the tribal broadband program which we were all excited about. And we covered that earlier on how we're going to treat that. It also had a provision in there about the Build America Buy America Act which is administered through the Made in America office this week, which has been branded MIAO. So, you have the Build America Buy America, BABA, and the Made in America Office, which is MIAO, and they are administering this particular component, and it's important. So, you know, all joking aside, I have small kids at home, so I like the joke. When I heard the BABA thing it very quickly reminded me of my newborn. This is a big deal, this has to do with domestic sourcing of equipment, and many of you, even today, have shared your concerns about supply chain challenges, and in the next NOFO, right now we are required to include the Build America Buy America provisions, which will require every applicant to source all your materials and equipment domestically, which is great.

02:09:18.140 --> 02:09:35.580

However, I have also heard from many of you that that the availability of those resources domestically isn't there, and, as many of you know, a lot of these materials are, and equipment are manufactured currently non-domestically.

02:09:35.590 --> 02:09:54.079

The question here today is, do we need to be seeking a waiver or not? Do you believe that the Build America Buy America provisions would impact your ability to complete the project that you're looking at? Should you be awarded, and especially being able to take that in a timely matter? So, with that being said, we're going to go ahead, and you know, take hands in the queue. This is again a very important question that could have major financial impacts around how you administer your tribes project, or how big of a project you may be able to do or not do. With that I will go ahead and pause, and we will wait to see if we get any comments in the queue. Also, because we are recording for the record on this question, I did hear Makah state they were seeking that they preferred that their tribe be exempt from the Build America Buy America provisions because of the supply chain concerns, and not wanting to limit their ability to complete their projects in a timely manner.

02:10:45.430 --> 02:10:49.519

So, I'll go ahead and pause, and Matt, we'll just wait and see if we have anybody come in the queue. And please don't be shy here, folks.

Matt Rogotzke

02:11:11.630 --> 02:11:18.710

There were a couple new questions that went into the Q & A as well in the last little bit. But we do have a comment. Anastasia Hoffman, we'll get her off mute and get her comment.

Adam Geisler

02:11:45.750 --> 02:11:47.550

All right, wonderful. All right. Miss Hoffman, you are up. Welcome.

Anastasia Hoffman

02:11:58.300 --> 02:12:16.530

*Native Language*. Thank you, Adam. Thank you all. I'm joining you from Bethel today. We're preparing for a pretty significant storm here later today. So, hopefully, my comments will come through before the before the storm hits. Qu yana for holding this forum. In response to your question, I think we all can appreciate and support the intent that BABA wants to accomplish. But the reality is that we're, we have this infrastructure need now in rural Alaska and rural Native America and across, within our communities. And we're trying to bring service urgently. That's why we saw such an over subscription to the award amounts that were initially provided in this program.

02:13:17.230 --> 02:13:26.730

So, considering that we're in the midst of a supply chain crisis, it's not the right time to impose this requirement. We appreciate the opportunity to express that, Qu yana Adam.

Adam Geisler

02:13:34.660 --> 02:13:48.859

Good to see you, Miss Hoffman. And I'm happy to see that you had a safe trip home, that you made it back, and I hear you loud and clear that the so just for the record, what I heard you state. Excuse me, is the intentions, I think we all agree, are there to do the right thing. The reality of the need and the deployment to the communities that need these services, and these supplies is now, and you don't want to see that impacted. So, it sounds like you're, you are an advocate in this case for an exemption from the Build America Buy America. Correct, is that what I heard?

Anastasia Hoffman

02:14:12.050 --> 02:14:13.110

Yes.

Adam Geisler

02:14:14.360 --> 02:14:19.169

Thank you, all right. Thank you so much for joining us today. Appreciate that. All right, anybody else?

Matt Rogotzke

02:14:31.200 --> 02:14:33.239

Looking quiet so far.

Adam Geisler

02:14:33.630 --> 02:14:34.849

Okay, while we're, while we're waiting here. I am going to, looks like we had feedback from the Monacan Indian nation. We did not meet the qualifications for round one due to the fact that ninety percent of the service area was covered by Starlink, which was not allowed by the State of Virginia. A week or so after the application deadline, the FCC denied Starlink approval. So, we are hoping to make the second round. Are we concerned with how it'll address prepayment and the costs?

02:15:07.190 --> 02:15:17.010

You know what I would say is that if you don't mind putting your name and your email in the chat, let us do a follow up on that. I'd like to get a little bit more detail on the specifics around the project. I will say we are not changing the enforceable build out commitment requirements that we all know, is strongly supported in the round one.

02:15:33.210 --> 02:15:44.979

And so, what I would say is, if you do not have an enforceable build-out commitment, and service is not being delivered at 25/3 to your households. I would strongly encourage you to apply for the second round. But, sounds like there may be some nuances here, and I guess I just say, that we're happy to work through those nuances here. The team is, and then it looks like Monacan in Virginia. So, I do have some members of my team on that work in the north. I guess I'd say the northeast, so I will make sure that we have them reach out and get ahold of you. So, thank you for the question. And then Dwayne Crank. I missed the consultation question three. Are you able to provide that for me?

02:16:24.960 --> 02:16:27.729

The question was about how to improve on providing technical assistance. And so, Dwayne also, we're happy to receive any feedback that you may have regarding that question and writing as well.

02:16:43.459 --> 02:16:48.980

And then it looks like we have Councilman, Head Councilman Garcia in the queue, Matt or did we get it?

Matt Rogotzke

It looks like the comment was made into the Q & A.

Adam Geisler

02:16:57.230 --> 02:17:15.509

All right. So, tribe should be excluded from the requirement to Buy America as explained by others. All right. So, at this again. I'm going to, we're going to have a transcript here. So, Councilman Garcia, I hear you that you are taking the position that tribes should be excluded from the requirement, and again, based upon the other reasons that other people have given. So, thank you, Councilman.

02:17:23.389 --> 02:17:42.329

Okay. Well, I will. There's no need to keep dragging this thing on. Ah, it's Friday, and I can understand if folks have other things that they need to get done. So, I don't want to take any more time than we have today. I'll give it three more seconds here to see if anybody else pops into queue for question 4.

02:17:43.730 --> 02:17:45.119

Three, two, all right, No hands. That's great. So, thank you for spending the last, the last few hours with us to walk through these really important questions that the team has come up with. I mean frankly based upon the feedback that you've all provided I want to highlight that the NOFO is not baked no, no different than it was before. We really wanted to understand where everybody's head is at. As we look to

figuring out how to improve on the NOFO, and so I want to thank all of you that provided your oral comments today or and that have provided written comments to us as well. Our program really prides itself on leveraging the feedback from all of you to improve the needs of Indian Country, and addressing the digital divide of the indigenous communities in our nation. So, thank you.

02:18:43.129 --> 02:18:57.460

Your feedback has been heard. We're going to do our best to incorporate that in a way that is equitable for everybody. So, thank you for participating. I also want to thank, this is our third and last consultation on NOFO number two. I want to thank the team, Matt, Isabel, Maci, Carole, for being on. I also know a number of my team within the TBCP team are on today and taking copious notes. So, thank you team for being here.

02:19:12.670 --> 02:19:20.970

And lastly, I want to thank again President Nez for the invocation and his leadership, as well as Assistant Secretary Davidson and all of our leadership at NTIA for continuing to support the work that we do. It is a great place to come work at NTIA, having the support of leadership that want to do what's right for tribal nations, and recognizing that trust responsibility. And that is exactly why we have had these consultations, and we will have more into the future. So, with that I hope everybody has a safe weekend, be blessed, and thank you again for attending today's consultation. Bye

02:19:50.080 --> 02:19:50.789

Now. Oh, Matt's going to kill me if I don't say this written consultation comments [TBCPConsultation@NTIA.Gov](mailto:TBCPConsultation@NTIA.Gov). If you want to submit your written comments again. The cut off is 9 p.m. Eastern, so please get your comments in today. And then, lastly, if you want to see how the awards are going and other information, you can check out the tribal nations tab on the BroadbandUSA website, which is where our tribal resources are located here at NTIA, within the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth. All right. Now, I'm really done. All right you guys. Have a great weekend again. Wish you love and be blessed. And you guys be safe. Thank you so much. Bye, now.

END TRANSCRIPT.