New Mexico Tribal Broadband News & Updates

Photo by **Theophilos Papadopoulos**

March 26, 2024 **nmtribalbroadband@gmail.com**

NM Tribal Working Group (TWG)
Meeting March 27, 2024
12:00pm, MT

You are invited to join the meetings.

Guest Speaker
Rebecca Seewald, Intergovernmental Affairs Advisor, NTIA
Discussing: *Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Challenge Process*

NM Tribal Broadband Working Group Meetings
- Every other Wednesday at 12:00pm, MT
- Zoom Link: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86256047626?pwd=MXdrVDJrdXFqVkNjVVVPc2U2aU1RQT09

Mission
To assist and support New Mexico Tribes in developing and deploying broadband infrastructure through tribal consultation and engagement that leads to expanded access to health care, education and economic opportunity and includes strategies for access to funding, technical assistance, project management support, workforce development and sustainability in ways that protect tribal sovereignty.

Become a Member!
If you are interested in becoming a member of the Tribal Working Group, please send an email to: connectnmcouncil@state.nm.us. In the body of your email, please include a brief statement of interest, including your experience relating to the work group's mission. Also, let us know how best to contact you about the status of your membership request. The Council appreciates your interest!

NTTA Tribal Broadband Summit
April 8-10, 2024
Wild Horse Pass Resort and Casino

Please join us for the National Tribal Telecommunications Association (NTTA) Tribal Broadband Summit!

The purpose of the Summit is to educate Tribal grant applicants and grant awardees about:
- Federal broadband network funding opportunities
- What is required to set up a front office/back office
- How to build a broadband network
- Broadband equipment/services necessary to build a broadband network
- Digital equity/digital inclusion

NTTA provides a forum for tribally owned companies and those who work in the telecommunications industry, to share knowledge and opportunities, discuss effects of regulation and address issues affecting tribal telcos and customers on tribal lands.

For more Summit information, and to register, click [here](#). Download the [Agenda](#).

Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Rural eConnectivity Program for Fiscal Year 2024 - Round 5

USDA is accepting applications for its fifth round of funding for the ReConnect Program to connect millions of people in rural America to affordable high-speed Internet. In order to continue connecting rural families, business owners, and agricultural producers to reliable, affordable high-speed Internet, USDA is making several Program improvements under Round 5. This will further increase the availability of funding in rural areas where residents and businesses lack access to affordable, high-speed Internet.

Deadline April 22, 2024
Press Release
Notice of Funding Opportunity

Grant Writing, Engineering, and Planning (GWEP) Grant
Open Application

The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) will award financial assistance grants to aid Tribal governments and local governmental units in procuring grant writing, engineering,

and/or planning assistance to help identify community broadband needs and to support applying for other funding sources for broadband-related projects.
Requirements:
- Open application until funds are obligated
- No matching funds required
- Max award is $100K
- Tribes are NOT required to provide a BTIN or TIN (see info and instructions below).

Nations, Tribes, and Pueblos (NTPs) are not required to provide a TIN. Agreements with NTPs usually occur via an Intergovernmental Grant Agreement, which does not have the same requirements as a contractor for instance. **In the application, look for the section: New Mexico Business Tax Identification Number (BTIN): For Tribal submissions this will remain "0" as this is not required.**

Click here for more information and to apply for the grant.

Affordable Connectivity Program Reimbursement and Wind Down

The Federal Communications Commission's Wireline Competition Bureau released a Public Notice (DA 24-274) to remind providers that May 2024 will be the last month for which providers will be able to seek reimbursement for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) benefits passed through to ACP households. Providers are not required to pass through any benefits to ACP households after April 2024. Providers can choose whether to pass on and claim the partial reimbursement for May service.

- **ACP Wind-Down Order (DA 24-23)**: Provides specific guidance to prepare consumers for the end of the ACP.
- **fcc.gov/ACP:** The most current information regarding the ACP wind-down.
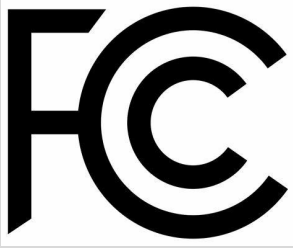- **ACP Wind-Down Fact Sheet**

NTIA Releases Build America, Buy America Waiver for BEAD Program

NTIA recently released the Build America, Buy America (BABA) waiver for the $42.45 billion BEAD Program. This release follows over a year of careful research and deliberate engagement with stakeholders – including 385 meetings with over 50 firms and 250 individuals — representing a diverse range of manufacturers, Internet service providers, trade associations, unions, and other stakeholders who could be impacted by BABA. The BABA waiver takes the strongest approach possible to protecting American jobs while also ensuring that we can quickly build Internet networks.

BABA Act: The domestic content procurement preference requires that all iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in covered infrastructure projects are produced in the United States.

BABA Waiver and FAQ

National Broadband Map Challenge Due Dates
You Can (and Should) Still Challenge the Maps!

It is critically important to correct any data that may be inaccurate indicating internet coverage as portrayed within the maps for funding to be spent in an effective manner to achieve meaningful broadband access for those who need it most, including the unserved and underserved in New Mexico.

Please note the following important **challenge dates**:
- March 25 - April 5, 2024: Connect New Mexico Fund Challenges

To review the maps and learn more about the challenge process, go to the Connect NM mapping and data webpage.

The National Broadband Map is an evolving data collection and has been providing more precise internet availability data with each update. While we have made significant improvements in the identification of Broadband Serviceable Location data in Tribal areas, we encourage you to review the map for your community. If you identify any remaining locations that are missing or misidentified, or availability data which you believe is inaccurate, you may submit a challenge to help improve the data.

- Information about how to submit a **Location Challenge**
- Information about how to submit an **Availability Challenge**

You can learn more about the National Broadband Map and the FCC's Broadband Data Collection by visiting: www.fcc.gov/broadbanddata. If you have any questions or would like to request technical assistance, contact Native@fcc.gov.

Tribal Broadband Leaders Network Meetings

The Tribal Broadband Leaders Network (TBLN) is for Tribal leaders across the country to share priorities and best practices, discuss emerging telecommunications policy issues, and identify engagement strategies with state broadband leaders. Tribal leaders and Tribal broadband providers are welcome to join.

If you are a Tribal leader or a Tribal broadband provider and would like to join TBLN or are an existing participant and have new staff to be added/contact changes, please reach out to TBLN@ntia.gov.

Next Meetings:
- Thursday, April 11: Topic TBD (Register here)
- Thursday, May 9: Topic TBD (Register here)

RESOURCES

National Tribal Telecommunications Association (NTTA)
- White Paper: Evaluating the Critical Need for Broadband Sustainability Funding on Rural Tribal Lands

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)
Tribal Nations Broadband Resources
- Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program
- Tribal Broadband Planning Toolkit
- Tribal Consultations
- Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program Awards
- Webinar Recordings
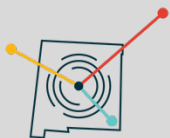- State Engagement
- Mapping Resources
- Additional Resources
- Contact

NTIA Digital Equity Assistance Materials
- Digital Equity in Tribal Communities
- FCC Report - Spectrum Access and Data in Tribal Communities
- Grant List
- Hi-Speed Internet Page
- Asset Mapping Guide
- NTIA's Digital Equity Act Program technical assistance materials
- What is Permitting?
- Environmental & Historic Preservation Checklist for BEAD
- Environmental & Historic Preservation Factsheet
- Digital Equity Plan Template

Connect New Mexico
- New Mexico Office of Broadband Access & Expansion (OBAE)
- Connect New Mexico Broadband Grant Program Map
- NM Broadband Speed & Quality Testing
- Connect New Mexico Working Groups
- Tribal Broadband Resource Library

Internet for All Funding Programs

Connect New Mexico Tribal Broadband Resource Library

The Tribal Broadband Resource Library is a collaborative project between the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department (IAD) and the New Mexico Office of Broadband Access & Expansion (OBAE).

Supported by the Tribal Broadband Task Force, it demonstrates New Mexico's dedication to enhancing Tribal connectivity through infrastructure development, adoption programs, and effective digital resource utilization.

The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion is committed to providing dependable, affordable, and equitable Internet access to all 23 sovereign Pueblos, Tribes, and Nations while respecting their unique needs and cultural diversity.

The webpage serves as a comprehensive resource center tailored for Tribal entities. It offers valuable information, including federal and state funding statistics, workforce development

resources, and funding opportunities for connectivity initiatives.

Click here to connect to the Tribal Broadband Resource Library.

Connect New Mexico
Connecting Our Communities

Connect New Mexico is a community-driven and community-focused resource to gather and share benchmark data and support local and regional community efforts to plan, fund, and implement broadband initiatives that provide reliable, affordable, high-speed broadband for all in New Mexico.

They honor the many community organizations, agencies, and individuals working to support Broadband for New Mexico, and invite you to get involved.

Review the Tribal Broadband Task Force Paper

Connect New Mexico Council Working Groups
- Connect New Mexico Grant Program
- Digital Equity & Inclusion (Chair Eli Guinnee and Co-Chair Catherine Nicolau)
- Mapping, Data & Evaluation (Acting Chair Natalie Runyan)
- Regional Planning & Community Engagement (Acting Chair Jerry Smith and Council Representative Katherine Crociata)
- Tribal Working Group (Chair Godfrey Enjady and Co-Chair Stephine Poston)
- Permits, Poles, and Attachments (Chair: Ovidiu Viorica)
- Connect New Mexico Grant Program and Rule Making Working Group
- (Chair Kimball Sekaquaptewa and Lead Vanessa Willock)

If you are interested in becoming a member of any of these groups, e-mail: connectnmcouncil@state.nm.us.

Check out their website, and sign up for the newsletter!

New Mexico Tribal Broadband

Previous New Mexico Tribal Broadband Newsletters are available **here**.