



# New Mexico Tribal Broadband News & Updates

Photo by [Theophilos Papadopoulos](#)

August 13, 2024  
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## Announcements

### NM Tribal Working Group (TWG) Next Meeting August 14th!

TWG is committed to ensuring New Mexico tribes are actively part of the historic broadband initiatives that will enhance tribal communities' access to education, healthcare and economic development. TWG meetings are the 2nd Wednesday of the month. Please join the meetings!

#### Agenda - August 14, 12:00pm-1:15pm, MDT

- Updates from OBAE
- Updates from Connect NM
- Guest Speaker - U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO)
- Announcements

#### Guest Speaker

- U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO)
- Topic - Findings from GAO's recent study on TBCP related to program reach, project sustainability, the environmental review process, and federal agencies' actions related to avoiding duplicative grants.

#### Zoom Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82590376479?pwd=Ky9vVDZsWDZ4K3pqVW1PRIJEcFNIZz09>

Meeting ID: 825 9037 6479

Passcode: 499759

If there are topics you would like to see covered in future meetings, please email [nmtribalbroadband@gmail.com](mailto:nmtribalbroadband@gmail.com).

#### Tribal Working Group (TWG) 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](mailto: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!



## Demonstrating Compliance with the Buy America Requirement

Earlier this year, NTIA [released](#) a narrow and targeted [Build America, Buy America \(BABA\)](#) waiver for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. The waiver requires certain equipment be produced in the U.S., while waiving the domestic manufacturing requirement for other equipment. The waiver will result in the majority of fiber broadband equipment—including optical fiber, fiber optic cable, key electronics, and enclosures—necessary to bring affordable and reliable high-speed Internet service to everyone in America being made here in the United States.

An announcement made on July 30th provides the framework for entities to self-certify and report compliance with the BABA requirements and use of the BABA waiver for the BEAD Program.

Read the full story [here](#).

## Funding Opportunities



### Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP) Round 2 - Updates

At this time, we are undergoing programmatic review of all applications that received a passing merit score. We do recognize that eRA Commons may state that your application's status is currently under "council review". This status does not mean that you have been awarded, but rather that it is undergoing review.

As the TBCP II application review continues, a reminder to please watch for messages regarding your application. Requests for any required curing will be sent out via email and turn-around times for your response remain very tight and strict.

TBCP No-Cost Extension - Must be made at least ninety (90) calendar days before the end of the award period. TBCP projects may be extended to a maximum period of performance of four (4) years.

Our program's intention is to begin making awards on a rolling basis in the fourth quarter of the 2024 calendar year. If you have further questions, please direct them to [TBCPNOFO2@ntia.gov](mailto:TBCPNOFO2@ntia.gov).



### USDA Broadband Technical Assistance Deadline **August 20, 2024**

The USDA Rural Development has made \$25 million available through its Broadband Technical Assistance (BTA) Program. The money will help communities build technical assistance and training to improve broadband adoption in rural America.

The program is designed to help local organizations, cooperatives and Tribes expand

affordable, high-speed internet projects in rural communities. There is no cost share or matching requirement.

Application closes on August 20, 2024. Click [here](#) to learn more and apply.



## Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program Deadline **September 23rd**

NTIA has published the [Competitive Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#), or view the [PDF here](#). The application is due September 23, 2024-  
-this deadline is for all eligible entities including Native entities.

These competitive grants will resource initiatives that support populations most impacted by digital divides. Low-income households, older adults, justice-impacted people, people living with disabilities, rural communities, and racial and ethnic minority groups are among the populations served by this program.

Competitive grant investments are an essential complement to broadband deployment strategies:

- Check out the [Digital Equity Technical Assistance Hub](#) for application help.
- Develop a timeline for completing your application.
- Begin gathering partnership letters and authorizations, both written and signed. These letters provide credibility and expertise, and will further your project's reach.

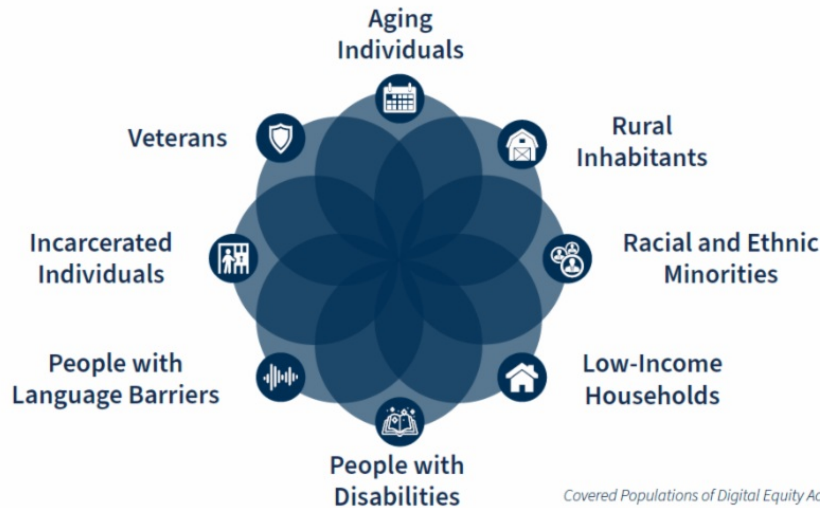
### **Webinars:**

- Wednesday, August 14, 2024 - 3:00 PM: Digital Equity Competitive Application Webinar, Part 2: Registration, Partnerships, LOCs
- Thursday, August 15, 2024 - 4:00 PM: Digital Equity Competitive Application Webinar, Part 3: Project Narrative
- Wednesday, August 21, 2024 - 3:00 PM: Digital Equity Competitive Application Webinar, Part 4: Plans (Risk, Etc.)
- Thursday, August 22, 2024 - 3:00 PM: Digital Equity Competitive Application Webinar, Part 5: Consolidated Budget Form
- Wednesday, September 4, 2024 - 3:00 PM: [Digital Equity Competitive Application Webinar: Troubleshooting the NGP](#)
- Tuesday, September 10, 2024 - 4:00 PM: [Digital Equity Competitive Application Webinar: Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program FAQ Webinar](#)

### **Resources:**

- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Digital Equity Competitive Grant Prime](#)
- [Application Materials](#)
- [July 25 Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program Webinar Recording and Slide Deck](#)
- [Upcoming Webinars on the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program](#)
- [Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program NOFO](#)
- [Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program Resource Page](#) (For FAQs, the application packet, etc.)
- [Technical Assistance Hub](#)

## Communities Most Impacted by the Digital Divide



### Enhance Your Grant Application - Consider Forming a Partnership for Solutions to Covered Populations

As eligible applicants prepare to apply for the first grants from the **Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program**, it is important to craft applications and projects that help create the conditions in which individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in the society and economy of the United States.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law mandates that funding be directed towards programs designed to empower those impacted by the digital divide, known as **Covered Populations**. Covered Populations include low-income households, aging populations, incarcerated individuals, veterans, people with disabilities, people with language barriers, racial and ethnic minorities, and rural inhabitants.

It is crucial to recognize that Covered Populations are not monolithic groups but encompass individuals with unique needs and lived experiences. When individuals are members of more than one of the Covered Populations they may experience even greater barriers to accessing digital technology, underscoring the importance of tailored solutions.

To have the greatest impact among Covered Populations, NTIA encourages stakeholders to consider whether forming a partnership is right for you. We achieve more when we work together. **Consider pooling your resources and expertise with other organizations to submit collaborative proposals that address the needs of your communities.** By working together, you can create more effective and comprehensive solutions that drive meaningful change and improve the lives of those you serve.

Applicants for the Digital Equity Competitive program should take [action now to get ready to apply](#).

- Develop a timeline to complete your application and be realistic about the time it can take to write and revise the application.
- If you are planning to apply through a partnership, start getting your partnership letters and authorizations written and signed. Partnerships can enhance an application by providing diverse expertise, increasing credibility, and extending a project's reach.

## State Digital Equity Capacity Grant



## September 25, 2024 to February 7, 2025

The purpose of the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program is to create the conditions where individuals and communities have the information technology capacity that is needed for full participation in the society and economy of the United States. The Plan seeks to empower individuals and communities with the tools, skills, and opportunities they need to benefit from meaningful access to affordable, reliable, high-speed Internet.

The application window for Indian Tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations ("Native Entities") will **open September 25, 2024, and close on February 7, 2025. Read the NOFO [here](#). Learn more about the NTIA Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program.**



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

The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) is awarding 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.

## Media Highlights/In the News



### Drew Lovelace (OBAE) on Several Radio Interviews

Acting Director Drew Lovelace was interviewed this past month by several radio stations to talk about OBAE's programs, successes, the Statewide Education Network, and OBAE's mission to help deliver high-speed internet across the state.

Listen to Drew's interviews with [Richard Eeds at KTRC radio in Santa Fe](#), [Blake Ovard at W105 in Lovington](#), [Frank Nymeyer KATK in Carlsbad](#), and [NMPBS's public affairs show "New Mexico in Focus."](#)

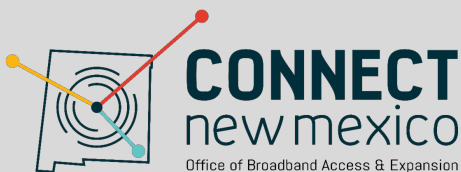
## OBAE Team Travels to Project Site to Assess Progress

Oso Internet Solutions is digging into its Pine Meadows fiber project in the Ramah Chapter in the Navajo Nation. Construction there is going smoothly. Two of OBAE's project managers and its Tribal Coordinator & Liaison visited the site to check out progress. The team got a firsthand look at construction and drove through communities that will be served by broadband. OBAE also spoke with OSO representatives about surrounding communities that could benefit from high-speed internet.



*From left to right: Jamie Cobeen, RDI Construction Manager, Richard Govea, OBAE Project Manager Bureau Chief, Margaret Merrill, CEO/Owner Oso Internet Solutions, Valerie "Victory" Quintana, OBAE Tribal Coordinator & Liaison and Mark Jacobs, OBAE Project Manager.*

## Upcoming Events & Trainings



### STATEWIDE EDUCATION NETWORK (SEN) Ribbon-cutting Albuquerque, August 15, 2024

For New Mexico schools and school districts, the state is remote, rural & sparsely populated in many areas and IT expertise is not uniformly available. The Statewide Education Network (SEN) will provide better connectivity and expert network management. SEN is the foundation for the state-coordinated "middle mile," or "broadband highway."

On August 15 there will be a ceremonial ribbon cutting to celebrate SEN becoming operational on July 1. The event will take place at 21st Century Public Academy at 10am. New Mexico's Secretary of Education will be among the dignitaries taking part in the ceremony.

**Read more about SEN [here](#).**



## 2024 ABQNOG Conference Networking for the Southwest Albuquerque, August 15th

A technical conference centered on broadband and networking and run by networking professionals to help other networking professionals.

Some of the topics include:

- Achieving Network Autonomy
- NM Statewide Education Network (SEN)
- Automation in a greenfield network
- Planning your IPv6 Network
- Peering 101
- Protecting your routes with RPKI
- State of the IXP

ABQNOG was created to meet other people in the region that run networks, expand your personal network by meeting others in the region and set up presentations on internetworking topics.

For more information, click [here](#).



## Digital Citizenship Training and Community Discussion Santa Fe and Taos, NM

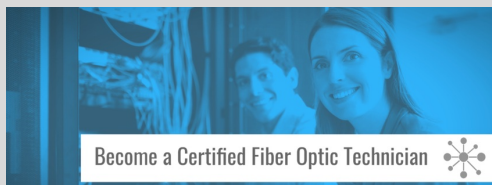
The state Public Education Department will host training sessions on how to safely navigate the internet — with lessons on screen time, social media use, artificial intelligence — for educators, parents and other community members.

New Mexico requires schools to include digital citizenship training for teachers in their digital equity tech plans. Part of New Mexico's Computer Science Strategic Plan, Digital citizenship is the ethical and responsible use of technology. Help students build these essential skills to safely.

The first two “digital citizenship” training sessions will be held as follows:

- [July 29-30, 9:00am - 3:15pm: Santa Fe](#)
- [August 1, 9:00am - 3:15pm: Taos](#)

“In today’s digital age, it is imperative that we provide students and families with the tools to navigate the online world safely,” Public Education Secretary Arsenio Romero.



## Fiber Optic Technician Certification Intensive Training August 26-30, Santa Fe, NM

This five-day, hands-on intensive program gives students the opportunity to earn three certifications from the Fiber Optic Association that are recognized throughout the world and aligned to industry standards. These credentials will remain valid for three years, after which they can be renewed by the student. Students can earn the following certifications: Certified Fiber Optic Technician, Certified Fiber Optic Specialist in Splicing, and Certified Fiber Optic Specialists in Testing and Maintenance.

Next intensive in the fall: October 28-November 1, 2024, in Grant County, NM

For more information, click [here](#).



## NTIA's Joint Cohort Summit Portland, OR - September 17-19

NTIA will be hosting the 2024 Joint Cohort Summit at the Portland Marriott Downtown Waterfront. Registration is now open!

The Joint Cohort Summit will bring together the State Broadband Leaders Network (SBLN), Digital Equity Leaders Network (DELN), and the Tribal Broadband Leaders Network (TBLN) and will be comprised of joint and individual sessions geared towards each cohort. You must be a TBLN participant to attend.

For more information and to register, click [here](#). **Please note that the room block closes on August 26.**

## Upcoming Meetings



### Tribal Broadband Leaders Network Meeting September 12th

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](mailto:TBLN@ntia.gov). If there are topics you would like to see covered in future TBLN meetings, please email [tbln@ntia.gov](mailto:tbln@ntia.gov).

Meetings are 1:00pm, MT : [Register here](#)

- September 12
- October 10
- November 14

## Job Opportunities

### Tribal Broadband Workforce Solutions Share your job opportunities!

The Tribal Broadband Newsletter wants to be a part of the workforce solution! We will start to post broadband job opportunities! **Share your job posting, please send them to [nmtribalbroadband@gmail.com](mailto:nmtribalbroadband@gmail.com).**



## Workforce Solutions Resources

- Webinar - Tuesday, August 20, 2024 - 3:00 PM: [Workforce Development Strategies by Minority Serving Institutions](#)
- [Calix Workforce Training Resources](#)
- [CNMC DE Work Group Agenda](#)
- [CNMC Digital Equity and Inclusion Working Group Resources](#)
- [BROADBAND RESOURCES - Broadband Workforce Development](#)
- [Professional Readiness and Technical Experience for Careers Program \(PROTECT\)](#)
- [The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions Apprenticeship Programs](#)
- [New Mexico State University Fiber Optic Courses](#)
- [Pathways to Success: NTTA Broadband Reference Guide](#)

## 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**

- [Local Coordination Summary Report - March 2024](#)
- [Tribal Nations Resource Page](#)
- [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**

- [State Digital Equity Planning Grant](#)
- [Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth 2023 Annual Report](#)
- [The Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth 2023 Annual Report](#)
- [Office of Minority Broadband Initiatives \(OMBI\) 2023 Annual Report](#)
- [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](#)
- [Five-Year Action Plan Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment \(BEAD\) Program](#)

#### **Internet for All Funding Programs**

**Apply for Broadband Right-of-Way in**



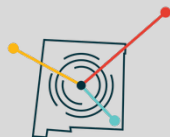
## Indian Country

The Bureau of Indian Affairs' Division of Real Estate Services reviews and processes applications for approval of rights-of-way and business leases for broadband development projects on individually owned Indian trust, Tribal trust, and restricted fee lands.

The Division of Real Estate Services (DRES) processes and reviews applications for rights-of-way (ROW) or business leases for broadband infrastructure development projects that are funded through federal infrastructure investment legislation and the [Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program \(TBCP\)](#) available to Tribes. This includes funding from other Department of the Interior (DOI) federal agencies for ROW, permits, or other agencies' authorizations for broadband development available to Tribes' Tribal utilities.

BIA has the delegated authority to review and approve rights-of-way and leases for broadband development on individually owned Indian trust land and restricted fee lands—ensuring that the required consent is received from American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes and/or individual landowners. There are specific exceptions that don't require BIA approval, and DRES can help to identify those cases.

Read more [here](#).



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## Connect New Mexico Tribal Broadband Resource Library

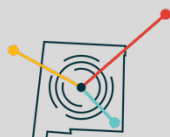
The Tribal Broadband Resource Library is a collaborative project between the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department (IAD) and the New Mexico Office of Broadband Access & Expansion (OBAE).

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.



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## 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](mailto: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](#).

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