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Office of Broadband Access & Expansion

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State awards 19th Tribal community broadband planning grant

SANTA FE – A New Mexico Pueblo may soon have an opportunity to make broadband more affordable to its members and to develop a plan for managing fiber service, thanks to a state broadband office planning grant.

The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) has awarded San Ildefonso Services, LLC a $100,000 grant through OBAE's Grant Writing, Engineering, and Planning Program (GWEP). San Ildefonso Services is the business arm of the Pueblo, which includes broadband and infrastructure development.

"This grant will help the Pueblo with long-term broadband sustainability and will help lower broadband costs for Tribal members," said **Neala Krueger**, OBAE state grants program manager. "Tribal communities and rural areas are critical in our mission to make high-speed internet available and affordable."

San Ildefonso Services will use the grant in several ways:

- To obtain Eligible Telecommunications Carrier (ETC) status. Becoming an ETC is a state regulatory step, serving as a path to funding and greater sustainability. Once an entity becomes an ETC it can participate in Universal Service Fund (USF) programs and New Mexico's Low-Income Telecommunications Assistance Program (LITAP).

- To begin grant writing to seek funds through the federal Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. If approved, the funds would be used for broadband use and adoption programs, network deployment and facilities equipment funding.

- To develop a fiber mapping and management plan overseeing lit and dark fiber service on the Pueblo and providing middle mile service to Los Alamos County.

This is the third GWEP award given to San Ildefonso Services. The two others were awarded in 2024 and were also each $100,000.

The state had allocated $5 million to the GWEP program to help cooperatives, Tribal communities and local governments get grants to help them provide broadband to unserved locations.

All GWEP grants are specifically used for broadband deployment planning. Funding expires June 30, 2027.

OBAE has now awarded 41 GWEP grants, including to 19 Tribal communities, 17 local governments and five rural electric and telephone cooperatives.

There is still $855,000 available in GWEP grants, and OBAE encourages Tribal communities, local governments and utilities to apply. The maximum amount allowed for each award under this state program is $100,000. No matching funds are required.

GWEP awards must be used in the planning of infrastructure projects — internet service providers are not eligible. Furthermore, the grants are not competitive; they are considered assistance grants aimed at spurring broadband infrastructure projects.

For more information and to apply for a GWEP grant, visit here.

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The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion is dedicated to serving New Mexico with a commitment to make high-speed broadband accessible to all New Mexicans. OBAE's mission is to expand and improve high-speed internet service with passionate leadership that drives bold, equitable, affordable and inclusive broadband solutions. OBAE seeks results that honor the state's rich heritage and elevate quality of life for all.

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