

IIJA FUNDING



**TRIBAL  
BROADBAND  
CONNECTIVITY  
PROGRAM**

Organized by:  
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Fairfax, VA



# TRIBAL BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY

With \$3B in funding as of 2021, the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program is intended to expand broadband access by improving network infrastructure and providing digital training and inclusion programs to Native American communities to improve quality of life, spur economic development, and create opportunities for remote employment, online entrepreneurship, remote learning, and telehealth.

NTIA wants to meet individual tribes where they are and help them with whatever their broadband needs are. Focusing on unserved and underserved areas (below 25/3 Mbps), NTIA will ensure that investments provide an adequate level of service in cases where it is unlikely to be made using private sources of funds.



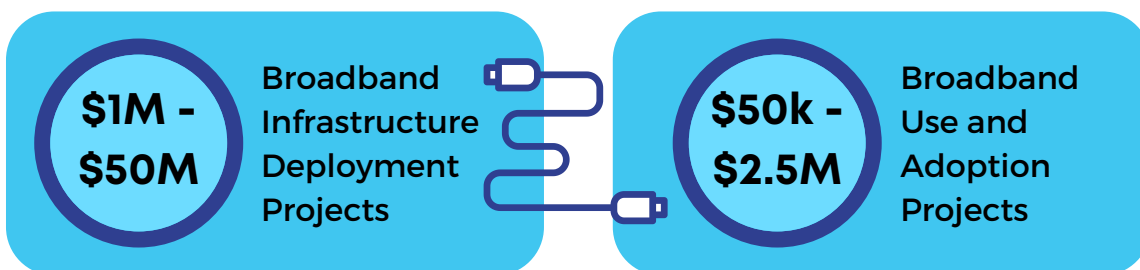
## PROGRAM STATUS

All applications for this program have been submitted as of September 2021. **There will be additional rounds of funding, which will be announced by the NTIA later in 2022.**

Disbursement of funds to accepted grantees began in December 2021. **Grantees will have 4 years to complete their projects.** Reporting to ensure compliance to the program's goals and appropriate use of funds is required throughout this process.

## FUNDING BREAKDOWN

NTIA has made awards under the program in the following ranges:



A total of \$3B in funding was provided to the TBCP, \$1B from NTIA and an additional \$2B from IIJA. Any funds that are not used in the designated period will be returned to the program to fund future projects.



## PROGRAM CHANGES

The IIJA funds extend the timeline on the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program by providing an additional \$2B. The NTIA is allowed to fully fund any existing grants, and will also have subsequent rounds of grants.

It has made changes to improve the grant deployment project, including:

- More time to deploy broadband networks:
  - 18 months to commit funds to an approved project
  - 4 years to expend all grant funding
  - NTIA may extend the deadline for eligible circumstances
- Reserving all federal funds allocated to TBCP. Unused funds will now be made available to other Tribal broadband projects rather than reverting to the U.S. Treasury.
- Awardees are still restricted from using more than 2% for administrative purposes.
- Broadband infrastructure construction projects may use up to 2.5% of the total project cost for planning, feasibility, and sustainability studies.

## ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

- Tribal governments
- Tribal organizations
- Tribal Colleges and Universities
- The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands
- Native Corporations

## PARTNERSHIPS AND COOPERATIVES

**Tribes can partner with a non-tribal entity to apply; they are also encouraged to partner with a sister tribe.** Tribal partnerships must have a primary tribe or tribal government as applicant. An eligible entity may participate as a lower-tier member of a consortia for Broadband Infrastructure Deployment **and** submit its own application as the primary for a Use and Adoption project.

## ELIGIBLE AREAS

Any land within the boundaries of an Indian reservation, pueblo, or rancheria, a former reservation in Oklahoma, **or** any land not located within the above if title is held:

- In trust by the US for an Indian Tribe or an individual Indian
- By an Indian Tribe or an individual Indian
- By a dependent Indian community.
- Within established regions of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act
- As Hawaiian Home Lands
- Near reservations where Native-specific services are provided, as designated by DOI



## ELIGIBLE USES

TCBP covers a broad range of eligible uses, unified by the goal of enabling unserved and underserved tribal communities to connect with a robust and resilient broadband network. The projects are categorized under two types:

- **Broadband Infrastructure Deployment**
- **Broadband Use and Adoption**

TBCP funds can be used for administrative and pre-application expenses on both types of project. Pre-application expenses are limited to 5%.

## BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE DEPLOYMENT

Broadband infrastructure includes cable, fiber, wireless, fixed wireless, and satellite. The NTIA encourages grantees to deploy future-proof (ie, fiber) infrastructure where possible, with commercial grade equipment that will scale to meet future needs. This includes:

- Construction of middle mile or last mile networks
- Establishment of carrier-neutral submarine cable landing stations
- Interconnection
- Building a Network Operations Center (NOC)

### **Broadband deployment on Tribal lands may:**

- Involve middle mile, last mile, or interconnection
- Deploy new broadband infrastructure
- Replace antiquated infrastructure
- Upgrade or extend existing infrastructure

## PRIORITY TO UNSERVED HOUSEHOLDS

For new construction of broadband infrastructure, eligible entities must prioritize projects that deploy to unserved households.

## PRE-DEPLOYMENT PLANNING

NTIA will accept project proposals to conduct planning, engineering, feasibility, or sustainability studies as part of the necessary steps to develop a technological solution for broadband deployment. Tribes may self-certify the status of proposed service areas with a description of how they determined that the area is unserved.

## WORKFORCE

Grantees must promote workforce development and use strong labor standards consistent with Tribal law, including local hire provisions.



## TIMEFRAME FOR DEPLOYMENT

**Grantees must complete their projects within 4 years of their receipt of funds.** The award period may be extended for construction projects if the grantee certifies that:

- It has a plan for the use of the grant funds
- The construction project is underway
- Extenuating circumstances require an extension of time

The Petition for Extension must be submitted no later than 90 calendar days before the end of the reward period. Unused funds must be returned.

## USE AND ADOPTION

NTIA encourages efforts to both address COVID-19-related concerns and also build the capacity of Tribal communities to use broadband for ongoing and sustainable benefits.

**There are no extensions available for Use and Adoption projects.**

### COVID-19 CONCERNS

NTIA recognizes the need for remote access to work, education, and health monitoring in response to the public health emergency of COVID-19.



Use and Adoption projects must provide one of the following:

### IMPROVE ACCESS

- Free or reduced-cost broadband service
- Preventing disconnection of existing service
- Build digital skills and workforce capacity

### ENCOURAGE ADOPTION OF BROADBAND SERVICES

- Broadband education
- Promote telehealth
- Remote learning
- Entrepreneurship
- Digital inclusion
- Economic growth
- Job creation
- Workforce Development

### EFFICACY STUDIES

- Assess Native American community needs and plan for digital skills development.
- Evaluate data on the adoption programs funded by the grant to determine their effectiveness and develop best practices.



## POTENTIAL APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDS

### Affordable broadband programs

- Free or reduced-cost service
- Preventing disconnection of existing service
- Public WiFi

### Technical Support

- Organizers and volunteers
- Tech support hotlines
- Community tech events

### Devices

- School laptop programs
- Refurbished/discount computers
- Public computer centers

### Digital Skills Training

- Remote learning
- Telehealth
- Digital literacy and online safety
- Workforce training

# ADMINISTRATIVE AND PRE-APPLICATION

Administrative expenses are identified as either direct expenses or indirect expenses. Direct expenses include subject matter experts and staff who are directly involved with the project. Indirect expenses include administration costs and pre-application services.

## PERSONNEL

Salaries and benefits for staff and consultants who provide services directly connected to TBCP grants (such as project managers, program directors, and subject matter experts).

## ADMINISTRATIVE

Including indirect costs. Limited to no more than 2% of grant funds.

## SUBAWARDS AND CONTRACTS

This includes program implementation and consulting services.

**Recipients are responsible for monitoring the activities and expenditures of subrecipients and vendors, ensuring that they are within the scope of the TBCP.**

## PRE-APPLICATION EXPENSES

Reasonable costs associated with preparing the grant application, limited to 5% of the award. These expenses must be incurred after the release of the related NOFO and prior to the grant being issued. Must be clearly identified in the proposed budget.

**These expenses will not be reimbursed by the NTIA if the applicant does not receive an award.**

## INELIGIBLE USES

Lobbying costs and contingency fees are not reimbursable from grant funds.



# TRIBAL CONSENT

Each eligible entity applying for Broadband Infrastructure Deployment funds is required to submit a Resolution of Consent from the Tribal Council of the appropriate governing body upon whose Tribal Lands the infrastructure will be deployed.

## ORGANIZATIONS, COLLEGES AND CONSORTIUMS

For Tribal Organizations and Tribal Colleges, even when the Tribal Government is a founding member, a Resolution of Consent must still be obtained.

In the case of consortiums, a Tribal resolution is required from each Tribal Government participating in the project.

## HAWAII

For Broadband Infrastructure Deployment Projects on Tribal Lands in Hawaii, consent must be obtained from the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands.

## ALASKA

For Broadband Infrastructure Deployment Projects on Tribal Lands in Alaska, all applicants must notify all Tribal Governments within the proposed service area. Any Tribal Government may choose to define the area for which it will require consent. This area must include their local presence and tribal member households, and be submitted to the NTIA.

If there is overlap between more than one Tribal Governments' definition of their area, they will be given an opportunity to work together to resolve.

## ALLOWANCE FOR COVID RESTRICTIONS

If a Tribal Government is not meeting due to COVID-19 restrictions or will not meet during the application window, NTIA will allow the submission of a Letter of Consent. NTIA will provide an opportunity to provide missing Resolutions of Consent during review of the application and before the application is approved.

## COORDINATION BETWEEN TRIBAL ENTITIES

For the best possible use of available funds, eligible entities are **strongly encouraged to coordinate** with one another so that there are no competing applications. Regional applications and consortiums are also encouraged. If there are competing applications, they may be given an opportunity to work together to resolve any potential overlaps.

**Deference will be given toward Tribal Governments on their own Tribal Lands.**



## PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Eligible entities should prioritize the construction of new broadband infrastructure that:

- Will serve currently unserved households
- Enhances economic development and provides new jobs
- Expands education, telehealth, public safety and telework access
- Produces high-quality infrastructure
- Averts disruptive and costly delays
- Promotes efficiency
- Promotes workforce development



## APPLICATION SCORING CRITERIA

TBCP is a competitive grant program. Eligible applications will be scored in three stages:

- Initial Administrative and Eligibility Review
- Merit Review
- Programmatic Review

Applicants that pass the administrative and eligibility review will be scored according to their effectiveness in meeting the program's goals. Preference will be given to projects according to:

- Level of impact on Tribal land
- Viability of the proposed plan
- Reasonable budget and sustainability

## BROADBAND USE AND ADOPTION PROGRAMS

- Level of impact on tribal land
- Project viability
- Reasonable budget and sustainability

## BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE DEPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

- Level of need on tribal land
- Affordability of services offered
- Technical approach and network planning
- Performance and operational capability
- Reasonable budget and sustainability

The NTIA may seek additional information during review and may suggest revisions to resolve perceived deficiencies. The applicant will have 14 days to respond.





# APPLICATION

## CURRENT APPLICATION STATUS

All initial applications for the TCBP were submitted to NTIA by September 1, 2021. As additional funds become available, NTIA will open another round of funding.

**This will be updated as NTIA releases more information on the upcoming rounds.**

## PROCESS FOR UPCOMING ROUNDS OF FUNDING

The NTIA will release the next Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) in late 2022. The timeline following the NOFO release will be:



## APPLICATION OVERVIEW

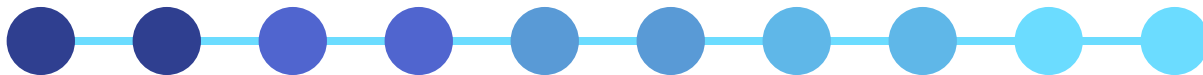
An eligible entity may submit only one application for the TBCP; they must coordinate internally with all departments and subsidiaries. This application must include the total amount of funding requested, and must account for all projects that will use those funds.

Applications must include:

- A detailed project plan and timeline
- Form 424
- A project narrative



## TIMELINE



- June 2021 - NOFO released
- September 1, 2021 - Applications due
- November 29, 2021 - NTIA completes review
- December 13, 2021 - Earliest start date
- **Late 2022 - New rounds of funding will begin**

This timeline will be updated as new information becomes available.



# REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Report	Due	Recurring
Financial Report (Semi-Annual)	No later than April 30 and October 30 each year.	Each financial period during the project.
Financial Report (Final)	120 days after the end of the project period.	Final report at the end of the project.
Performance Report	No later than April 30 and October 30 each year.	Each financial period during the project, semi-annually.
Annual Report	1 year after receiving grant funds.	Annually until all grant funds have been expended.

## FINANCIAL REPORTS

Each award recipient will be required to submit an SF 425 Federal Financial Report on a semi-annual basis for the periods ending on March 31 and September 30 of each year. Reports will be due within 30 days after the end of the reporting period.

A final financial report is due within 120 days after the end of the project period.

## PERFORMANCE (TECHNICAL) REPORTS

Grantees will be required to submit a technical progress report on a semi-annual basis for the periods ending on March 31 and September 30 of each year.

## ANNUAL REPORT

- Describes how the covered partnership expended the funds during that year
- Certifies that the grantee complied with all requirements of the grant, including:
  - A description of each service provided with the grant funds
  - The number of locations where that service was provided
- Identifies each subgrantee that received a subgrant and a description of the specific project for which those grant funds were provided

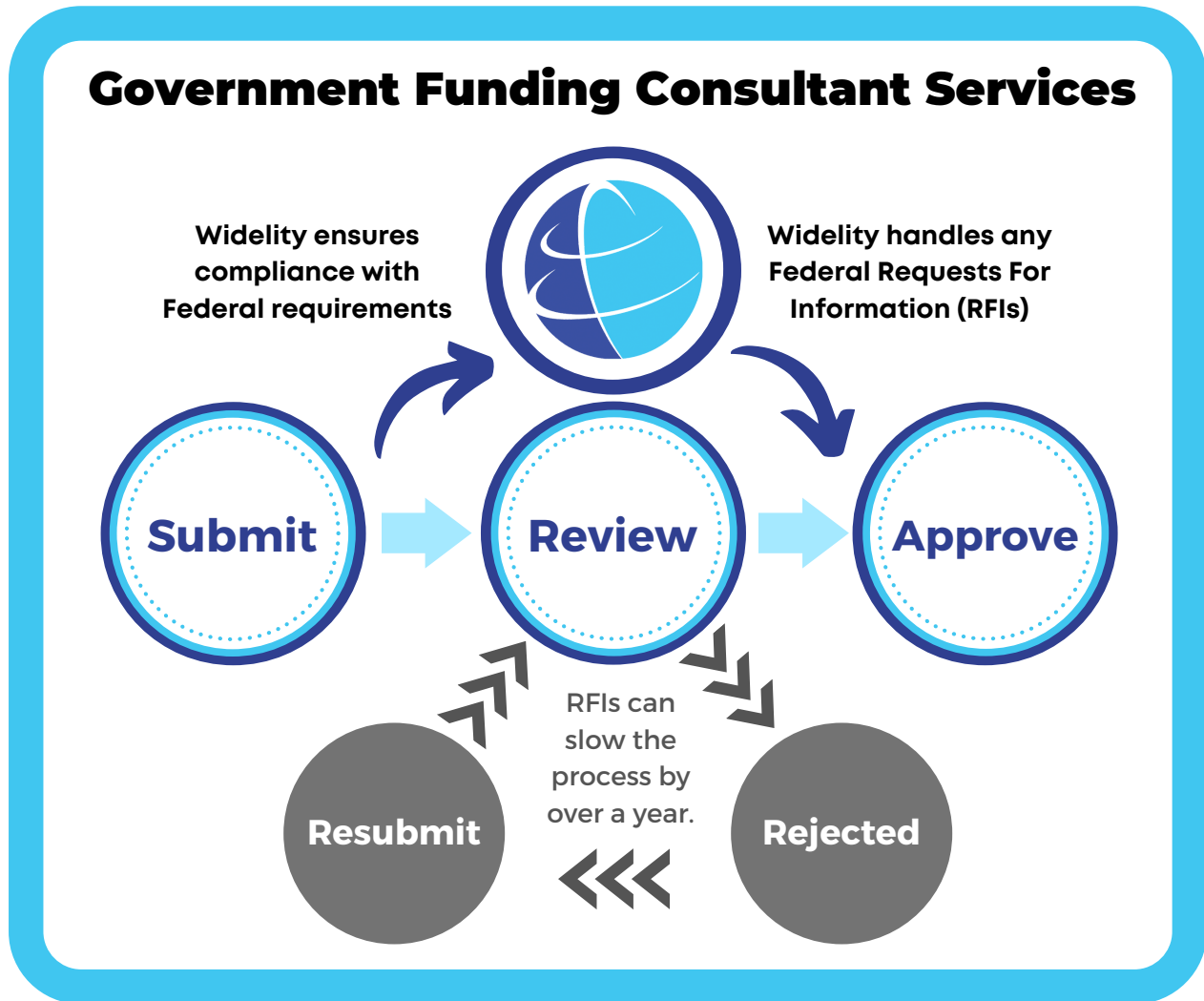
## TRANSPARENCY STANDARDS

If Federal awards exceed \$10M during the project, then the grantee must maintain information regarding civil, criminal, and administrative proceedings. Any non-federal entity that expends Federal awards of \$750k or more in a year must conduct an audit.



# VALUE WIDELITY PROVIDES

Widely specializes in program and project management. We have provided services to clients seeking funding from multiple jurisdictions and agencies. Our experience in deployment strategy, technology, and supply chain management uniquely qualify us to meet your needs.



## READY TO ASSIST YOU

- Determine your eligibility
- Organize application materials
- Identify potential issues
- Submit the application
- Support for all post-award compliance and reporting

## REIMBURSABLE WITH GRANT FUNDS

The TCBP allows for up to 5% of grant funds to be used for pre-application expenses, including 2% for administrative expenses.



## WHO WE ARE

Widely is a Small Business that provides eligible entities Government Funding Consulting Services (GFCS). We write and submit the application, complete any reporting and compliance documentation requirements and support clients to navigate all aspects of government funding programs.

## COMPANY DATA & METRICS

- Founded in 2006
- 100+ Personnel
- Processed over 150k documents
- Successfully completed 6k+ RFIs
- Nationwide team and client base
- \$390M+ in client reimbursements to date
- Clients on track for \$2B+ in reimbursements
- Excellent relationship with federally approved program administrators

## PAST PERFORMANCE

### Successful Government Contracts:

- Report and Catalog of Installation and Replacement Costs for the Wireless Competition Bureau (FCC) (2020 - 2021)
  - Exceptional CPARS evaluation rating
- Report and Catalog for the Media Bureau for the Broadcast Incentive Auction (FCC) (2013 - 2014)

### Successful client-focused initiatives:

- FCC Broadcast Incentive Auction
- FCC Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Reimbursement
- SBA Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) Program
- NTIA Connecting Minority Communities (CMC) Program

## CONTACT US

We are experts in fulfilling all government regulatory requirements and look forward to supporting you. Please reach out to us today at [compliance.info@widely.com](mailto:compliance.info@widely.com) and let's work together to ensure you are in full compliance.