



# AMERIND Critical Infrastructure: *Tribes Connecting Tribes*

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# Introduction



# Broadband in the Community

## BROADBAND AS A TOOL FOR TRIBES

The infographic features a row of five brown, stylized buildings at the top. Below each building is a circular icon representing a sector: a red cross for Healthcare, a graduation cap for Education, a yellow star with 'POLICE' for Public Safety, an open book for Tribal Library, and a red house for Housing. Each icon is connected to a white box containing a list of benefits.

Healthcare	Education	Public Safety	Tribal Library	Housing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Telemedicine</li><li>• Enables remoting monitoring, testing, and diagnosis</li><li>• Better more affordable health care for Tribal families</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Distance learning</li><li>• Dual enrollment in higher education</li><li>• Computer-based assessments</li><li>• College and scholarship applications</li><li>• Gives Native children the same opportunities as other children</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Faster Response Times</li><li>• Better coordination with outside agencies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community computing centers</li><li>• Lifelong on-line learning</li><li>• Bill pay, federal benefits,</li><li>• Job searches</li><li>• Filing taxes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increases value of Tribal homes</li><li>• Protects Tribal homes:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- "Smart grid" utilities</li><li>- Control HVAC fire alarms, security systems</li></ul></li></ul>

# The Reality – Broadband on Tribal Lands Today

**27.7% of those living on Tribal lands nationwide do not have access to 25/3 Mbps**

- This compares to less than 6% of those living on non-Tribal lands nationwide who lack access to 25/3 Mbps

***The gap is even greater on rural Tribal lands, where 47.1% of those living on rural Tribal lands do not have access to 25/3 Mbps***

- This compares to 22.3% of those living in non-Tribal rural areas who lack access to 25/3 Mbps

▲ *2020 Broadband Deployment Report, FCC (April 2020)*

# The Reality – Broadband on Tribal Lands Today

## Device used to access the internet

- 38% use smartphone
- 22% use desktop or laptop
- 12% use tablet

## Phone connectivity at home

- 69% all the time
- 22% some of the time
- 9% none

## Top 3 locations to connect

- 31% wherever they get cell reception
- 27% public Wi-Fi while patronizing a business
- 15% while at a friend or relative's house

▲ *Tribal Technology Assessment, American Indian Policy Institute, ASU (2019)*

# Federal Funding – Federal Communications Commission

## The Universal Service Fund – Annual Budgets



**\$2.25B**

*\* only program with a Tribal-specific component*

*\*\* Tribal TANF is a qualifying program*



**\$4.5B**



**\$4.15B**



**\$571M**

# Dual Challenges on Tribal Lands Today

## *Deployment = Accessibility*

- Today, less than 40% of Tribes in rural areas have access to high-speed internet, or broadband
- Service providers have chosen not to build out to sparsely populated and often cyclically impoverished Tribal communities

## *Adoption = Affordability*

- The result: Even where available, very high costs for very slow internet service
- COVID-19 has only exacerbated this systemic problem

# One Current Federal Initiative to Close the Tribal Digital Divide

## *2.5 GHz Tribal Priority Window*

- Once-in-a-generation opportunity for Tribes to obtain spectrum licenses (window closed Sept. 2, 2020)
- Available to federally recognized Tribes, Alaska Native Villages, and Hawaiian Home Lands in rural areas
- 2.5 GHz spectrum is capable of providing high-speed wireless broadband service
- Puts Tribes in control of the provision of service
- Provides Tribes with a bankable economic asset

# Questions?

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