

Appendix E: Tribal Outreach

The UBC planning team held Tribal consultation meetings with Tribal entities throughout the state. The first part of these consultation meetings included a presentation of the Connecting Utah initiative, BEAD funding, the Utah Internet Speed Test, the FCC maps and challenge process, the ACP, and the Digital Equity Act. During this presentation, the team shared data about the current state of broadband in each participant's area of influence. The second portion of these stakeholder meetings and workshops was discussion-based. The team posed general discussion questions in each meeting about the current state of high-speed internet, broadband needs, access challenges, plans, deployment, affordability and digital access.

Key takeaways about the current state of digital connectivity from the Tribal Consultation meetings included:

Infrastructure and Broadband Availability

- Each tribal entity experiences unique geographical considerations within their own community. Some tribes are not located on tribal lands, others live on tribal lands that exist in between pockets of privately owned lands, and some tribal communities are distributed throughout the state and do not live on tribal lands. Each of these distinctive situations facilitates a variety of experiences with broadband expansion, such as the quantity of Internet Service Providers (ISPs), available technologies, expansion costs, permitting regulations and topography that exists within a given community. Many tribal entities are actively working to build relationships with ISPs in their area to improve community access to broadband.
- Tribal communities cited that initial connection fees and monthly costs are often prohibitive for community centers and residential homes. Additionally, the available speeds and technology are lacking. In some areas, satellite is the only technology available, and cloudy or stormy weather often results in greatly diminished speeds. This can also be true for cable lines. In some communities, if one cable line experiences an outage in the area, every cell provider goes out and they lose electronic communication ability.
- High mountain ridges can also block valleys from receiving reception. This is a major safety concern, as individuals must ascend to higher ground to request emergency response. Being able to have the ability to provide reliable service for emergency response and law enforcement teams is a great need in some communities.
- Barriers to infrastructure and broadband expansion include topography that makes it difficult or cost prohibitive to deploy broadband, right of way, environmental, and utility and permitting processes, etc.

Devices and Digital Access

- Some Tribal communities have been able to utilize COVID relief funding to subsidize community member's internet subscription costs and provide devices for families. It is a priority to ensure that every student who needs a device has access to one. However, as the funding that was


received in 2020 is not continuous, many communities do not have funds to continue these efforts.


- Digital literacy programs including basic computer skills and education around identifying and preventing scams is desired in many communities. Currently, there is generally not enough funding and staff availability to host community classes or provide a digital literacy navigator for community members. Multiple tribal entities expressed a desire to increase workforce development opportunities for tribal community members to learn specialized skills that would aid in bringing additional broadband deployment and digital access opportunities to their communities.

Community Resources and Needs

- Each tribal community has distinct community resources available to assist in connecting community members to broadband. Some communities have child-care programs and youth centers, libraries, computer labs, senior centers, recreational centers, educational centers, etc. while other communities have more limited resources. Hotspots and device check-out programs are available for some communities, in limited quantities, at local libraries, however, staffing to assist with digital navigation needs are often very limited.
- The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) has been heavily promoted in some communities through newsletters, door-to-door canvassing efforts, etc., while other communities requested more information and assistance in educating their community members about the ACP.
- It was expressed that for many communities, broadband was viewed as a luxury, however, after 2020 it is starting to be viewed as a necessity. Broadband expansion opportunities for tribal communities could contribute to expansion of business and economic growth, educational and telehealth opportunities, faster emergency response times, etc.

TRIBAL CONSULTATION FLYER






BROADBAND EQUITY, ACCESS AND DEPLOYMENT (BEAD) TRIBAL CONSULTATION

The Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act (IIJA) is providing \$65 billion to ensure that all Americans have access to reliable and affordable high-speed internet. This investment is divided into the following programs:

IIJA BROADBAND PROGRAMS			
BEAD Program	Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program	Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program	Digital Equity Act Programs
\$42B	\$1B	\$2B	\$2.75B
<p>Aims to provide high-speed internet connectivity to all unserved and underserved areas across America.</p> <p>Eligible Entities: All 50 states, the District of Columbia (D.C.), Puerto Rico and other U.S. Territories</p>	<p>Encourages the expansion and extension of middle mile infrastructure to reduce the cost of high-speed internet service.</p> <p>Eligible Entities: States, tribal governments, native entities, utility cooperatives, public utility districts and others</p>	<p>Provides funding to expand access and adoption of broadband service on tribal land.</p> <p>Eligible Entities: Native corporations and tribal governments, colleges or universities, and organizations</p>	<p>Supports the closure of the digital divide and promotes equity and digital inclusion so that individuals can fully participate socially and economically</p> <p>Eligible Entities: All 50 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico</p>

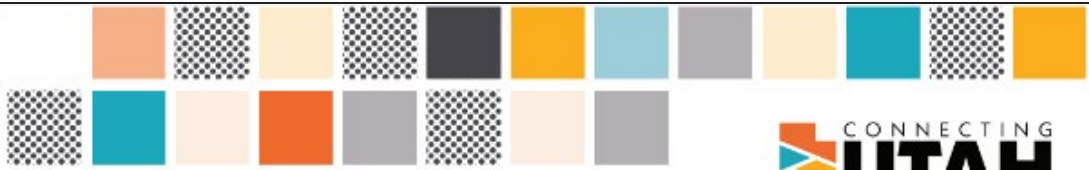
TRIBAL CONSULTATION OBJECTIVES

- Collaborate on state and tribal high-speed internet planning and implementation timelines
- Begin dialogue and collect feedback from tribal governments
- Gain an understanding of tribal high-speed internet deployment activities to date and future priorities
- Share communication mechanisms to continue collaboration with tribal governments



CONTACT INFORMATION

HOTLINE: 435-264-8880 **EMAIL:** connectingutah@utah.gov **WEBSITE:** allonline.utah.gov




BROADBAND EQUITY, ACCESS AND DEPLOYMENT (BEAD) TRIBAL CONSULTATION

TIMELINE



Utah Broadband Center Agency Official
Rebecca Dilg | 801-538-8681
Director | rdilg@utah.gov

DEAR TRIBAL LEADER LETTER



**Governor's Office of
Economic Opportunity**

Spencer J. Cox
Governor

Deidre M. Henderson
Lt. Governor

Daniel Hemmert
Executive Director

Dear Honorable [Tribal Leader]:

We are reaching out on behalf of Connecting Utah, an initiative of the Utah Broadband Center (UBC), powered by the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity, in hopes of establishing a strengthened relationship while offering assistance in the acquisition of funding for [your Tribe] for broadband expansion and access efforts. Federal funding has been made available under the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) and Digital Equity (DE) programs set forth by the Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act (IIJA). Tribal governments are eligible as sub-grantees for both BEAD and DE funding, in addition to being eligible for funding offered through the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program.

Utilizing BEAD and DE funding, the UBC is working to create a five-year Digital Connectivity Plan that will guide the state's efforts to provide all Utahns with reliable broadband internet access.

Our goal is to help identify each unique challenge [Tribe Name] may be experiencing regarding access to high-speed internet. Once these challenges are identified, we aim for a concerted effort in coordinating state and Tribal resources to overcome these challenges through BEAD and DE funding. This is possible with a relationship built on mutual trust and respect. As a result, we are requesting permission to proceed in this unified effort by means of a formal Tribal consultation.

During the Tribal consultation (if one is granted), we look forward to:

- Collaborating on state and Tribal high-speed internet expansion plans and implementation timelines
- Learning if your Tribal community would like to participate in the state broadband plan and, if so, who the key individuals for this effort would be
- Determining if your community wishes to develop a connectivity plan if one is not already available
- Gaining an understanding of Tribal high-speed internet deployment activities to date as well as future priorities for deployment
- Identifying specific needs around digital equity and access, along with potential solutions
- Providing information about planning funds and technical assistance that may be available to your community

The first Tribal Consultation will be held in conjunction with the Utah Division of Indian Affairs 2023 American Indian Caucus Day. The event will be held in-person on Tuesday, Jan. 31, at 10 a.m. at the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity located in the World Trade Center building at 60 East South Temple, Third Floor, Salt Lake City, UT. A virtual option for attending will also be made available. Free parking is available at the City Creek Center. Park at the east end and bring your parking ticket for validation.

We welcome further discussion and coordination through one-on-one consultations with the [Tribe Name]. We anticipate holding these consultations in January and February 2023. You may request a one-on-one consultation by contacting our team via email at connectingutah@utah.gov or by phone at 435-264-8880.

1 801 538 8680 | business.utah.gov | 60 East South Temple, Suite 300 Salt Lake City, Utah 84111-1041

We will finalize our planning effort and submit the five-year Digital Connectivity Plan to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) by early Summer 2023.

Enclosed you will find a Tribal Consultation Flyer that provides details on the BEAD and DE programs in Utah and a timeline for planning and program implementation. Connecting Utah team members are also available to answer any questions you may have.

We thank you for your engagement to date and look forward to strengthening the relationship between the State of Utah and [Tribe Name] government. Ultimately, we are here to offer support and assistance for the expansion of high-speed internet and digital use in your community.

We appreciate the opportunity to gain an understanding of your unique knowledge, and we are looking forward to working together to take advantage of this unprecedented funding opportunity. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Rebecca Dilg, Utah Broadband Center Director, at 801-538-8681 or at rdilg@utah.gov. The State of Utah and the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity looks forward to the honor and privilege of working with [Tribe Name] community.

Sincerely,



Deidre M. Henderson
Utah Lieutenant Governor

Attachments:

Connecting Utah Tribal Consultation Flyer