Funding will be for feasibility studies on deployment or expansion of high-speed internet in Native American communities

Media Contact: NewsMedia@bia.gov
For Immediate Release: April 27, 2020
Print PDF

WASHINGTON – Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Tara Sweeney announced an extension of the National Tribal Broadband Grant program (NTBG) grant application deadline. The NTBG is open to federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) tribes and is published in Grants.Gov from the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (IEED).

Funding will be for feasibility studies for the deployment or expansion of high-speed internet (broadband) transmitted, variously, through digital subscriber line (DSL), cable modem, fiber, wireless, satellite and broadband over power lines (BPL). The closing time and date for the receipt of applications and mandatory attachments is 11:59 p.m. ET on June 15, 2020.

“I look forward to reviewing the incoming proposals for the first ever National Tribal Broadband Grant program,” said Assistant Secretary Tara Sweeney. “The Trump Administration has prioritized broadband deployment and this funding will support the development and expansion of broadband connectivity in tribal communities across our great country. Given the wide-ranging uses of broadband in telemedicine, job training, education, starting and expanding businesses, public safety, and other applications, I urge tribal leaders to consider this exciting opportunity and submit proposals.”

The purpose of NTBGs is to improve the quality of life, spur economic development and commercial activity, create opportunities for self-employment, enhance educational resources and remote learning opportunities, and meet emergency and law enforcement needs by increasing broadband services to Native American communities that lack adequate connectivity.

“Broadband access on tribal lands lags far behind the rest of America and this deficit has far reaching effects, particularly as Arizona’s Native American communities are grappling with the health and economic devastation of the coronavirus pandemic,” said **Senator Martha McSally (R-AZ)**. “Without high speed internet, tribal members are missing out on the great advancements in e-commerce, job opportunities, education, and healthcare that are increasingly becoming essential components of modern life. This extension is critical to allowing Arizona’s tribes to succeed in the advancing digital universe and I encourage our state’s tribal leaders to apply for this opportunity.”

Grants may be used to fund an assessment of the current broadband services, if any, that are available to an applicant’s community; an engineering assessment of new or expanded broadband services; an estimate of the cost of building or expanding a broadband network; a determination of the transmission medium(s) that will be employed; identification of potential funding and/or financing for the network; and consideration of financial and practical risks associated with developing a broadband network.

Questions regarding this solicitation may be addressed to James R. West, NTBG Manager, Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development, by email at jamesr.west@bia.gov or by phone at 202-595-4766.

Applicants must submit the NTBG grant SF-424 form and the Project Narrative Attachment form in a single email to IEEDBroadbandGrants@bia.gov, Attention: Ms. Jo Ann Metcalfe, Certified Grant Specialist, Bureau of Indian Affairs. Additional information about application guidance, forms and instructions can be found in the proposal solicitation notice.

The Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs oversees the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development whose mission is to foster stronger American Indian and Alaska Native communities by helping federally recognized tribes develop their renewable and non-renewable energy and mineral resources; increasing access to capital for tribal and individual AI/AN-owned businesses; assisting tribes in building the legal infrastructure necessary for their economic progress; and enabling tribal and individual AI/AN-owned businesses to take advantage of government and private sector procurement opportunities.

####