Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON – The Trump Administration announced today that the U.S. Department of Interior's Indian Affairs Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (IEED) has approved National Tribal Broadband Grant (NTBG) program grants to 23 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and two Navajo Nation communities to study the feasibility of developing or extending broadband services in their areas.

The NTBG grants will enable recipients to hire qualified consultants to research the potential deployment or expansion of high-speed internet transmitted, variously, through digital subscriber line (DSL), cable modem, fiber, wireless, satellite and broadband-over-power lines (BPL).

The purpose of the NTBG program is to 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 bringing broadband services to Native American communities that lack them.

"Broadband can dramatically improve the quality of life in American Indian and Alaska Native communities," said **Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Tara *Katuk* Sweeney**. "Quick, convenient and reliable access to the internet is a modern necessity. Yet, tribes frequently find themselves on the wrong side of the digital divide. These grants are an important first step in bringing broadband to communities that sorely need them."

The solicitation for the NTBG program was published in the Federal Register on February 10, 2020, and closed on June 15. Fifty-five proposals were submitted by tribal applicants totaling $2,658,638. Submissions were rated largely on the potential positive impacts broadband could bring to an applicant's community.

Twenty-three of the NTBG grants involve studies of broadband projects located in Opportunity Zones. An Opportunity Zone is an economically distressed community where new investments, including investments in broadband systems, may be eligible for preferential tax treatment under certain conditions (26 U.S.C. §§ 1400Z-1 and 1400Z-2).

Feasibility studies funded by the grants will be conducted by professionally qualified third parties, including private consulting or engineering firms. They will assess the current broadband services, if any, that are available to each grantee's community; engineering evaluations of new or expanded broadband services; estimates of the cost of building or expanding broadband networks; determination of the transmission medium(s) to be employed; identification of potential funding and/or financing for networks; and consideration of financial and practical risks associated with developing broadband systems.

The Fiscal Year 2020 grantees and funding amounts are:

- **Blackfeet Tribe,** Montana -- $46,000

- **Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes,** Alaska -- $50,000
- **Cherokee Nation,** Oklahoma -- $50,000
- **Circle Native Community,** Alaska -- $40,000
- **Dilkon Chapter, Navajo Nation,** Arizona -- $50,000
- **Fort Belknap Indian Community,** Montana -- $49,546
- **Hoopa Valley Tribe,** California -- $49,500
- **Hualapai Indian Tribe,** Arizona -- $50,000
- **Kayenta Township, Navajo Nation,** Arizona – $48,778
- **Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Reservation,** Montana -- $50,000
- **Metlakatla Indian Community of the Annette Island Reserve,** Alaska -- $50,000
- **Native Village of Barrow Iñupiat Traditional Government,** Alaska -- $49,606
- **Native Village of Unalakleet,** Alaska -- $49,504
- **Noorvik Native Community,** Alaska -- $50,000
- **Oglala Sioux Tribe,** South Dakota -- $50,000
- **Pueblo of Laguna,** New Mexico -- $50,000
- **Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians,** Wisconsin -- $33,500
- **Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Mission Indians,** California -- $48,500
- **Seneca Nation of Indians,** New York -- $50,000
- **Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse Reservation,** South Dakota -- $39,360
- **Spirit Lake Tribe,** North Dakota -- $50,000
- **Susanville Indian Rancheria,** California -- $47,016
- **Ute Mountain Ute Tribe,** Colorado -- $49,840
- **Wichita and Affiliated Tribes,** Oklahoma -- $50,000
- **Yurok Tribe,** California -- $48,850

Visit the IEED website for information about other programs and services.
