

Tribal Broadband Planning Toolkit

Looking to create a tribal broadband plan? Start here.

Welcome to the Tribal Broadband Planning Toolkit! This Toolkit provides tribal entities with the guidance, knowledge, and resources to design, implement, and maintain a broadband plan in their communities. Made up of seven worksheets, this Toolkit offers insights, interactive tools, and links to technical assistance resources for every stage of the broadband planning journey. While we understand that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to crafting a broadband plan, we hope that this Toolkit provides foundational resources to get you started.

Expanding Broadband to Tribal Communities

Expanding broadband access and use can help tribal communities better meet and serve the needs of their people. Broadband offers far-reaching benefits such as helping improve public safety response times, expanding telehealth and telework opportunities, and providing greater economic advantages. Broadband also provides new opportunities to connect native people and share their stories and traditions.

How to Use this Toolkit to Meet Your Goals

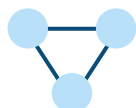
This Toolkit offers a collection of worksheets and interactive exercises to guide you through the steps to build a plan for broadband development, adoption, or expansion. Use the principles below to guide your use of the Toolkit:

- 1 Use the Toolkit in any order.** Each worksheet can be used on its own to access guidance and resources on an element of broadband planning. Choose the worksheets that engage with your tribal entity's broadband planning needs.
- 2 Treat the Toolkit as a companion throughout your broadband journey.** Each worksheet has both a learning component and an activity to guide you through that element of broadband planning. Treat the worksheets as reference guides to return to throughout your broadband planning journey.
- 3 Refer to the accompanying Tribal Broadband Plan template.** The Toolkit includes a companion Tribal Broadband Plan template in Microsoft Excel that you can use to build out your broadband plan. Read and populate the template in conjunction with the Toolkit as a more complete broadband planning resource.

Seven Elements: Building a Tribal Broadband Plan

Making a broadband plan involves seven major elements, each of which is important to work through to turn your broadband vision into reality. Each element is covered by a worksheet in the Toolkit, which is comprised of learning and activity-based resources that your tribal entity can use to learn about and create a broadband plan.

Below are the seven elements, along with information on what the accompanying worksheets in the Toolkit can help you do.



Assemble a Team

- Figure out what skills you need on your team to be successful
- Identify people to join your team
- Select a team member to lead your broadband project



Determine Your Priorities

- Understand the basic concepts behind broadband access and use
- Think through barriers that prevent meaningful broadband access
- Identify where to focus your broadband plan to address barriers in your community



Explore the Data

- Explore data sources that provide insight into what broadband looks like in your community
- Learn how to measure your community's current internet usage and access



Build Relationships for Success

- Consider partnerships often involved in the broadband planning process
- Identify partners to engage throughout planning and project implementation



Select the Right Solutions

- Evaluate options to execute your plan, including technologies or programs
- Explore funding options available to support the plan execution



Prepare a Budget

- Detail the expenses that your broadband plan will include
- Consider various cost options and provide justification for each cost that you select



Chart a Path Forward

- Develop a project plan to guide execution of your broadband plan

Assessing Your Community's Strengths

When creating and implementing your broadband plan, you will need to draw upon the many strengths within your community. What are some skillsets and relationships present in your community that may be an asset to broadband planning? Are there competing priorities or considerations that may pose a challenge?

Before you begin the exercise of broadband planning, think through the guiding questions below to help identify your tribal entity's strengths and challenge areas that may impact this process. Keep these in mind as you embark on your broadband planning journey.

Skillsets: What skillsets are present in your community?

Broadband planning requires involvement from many people with a broad range of skillsets, including data analytics, program management, budget planning, and technical expertise. Use this guide as a resource to identify which skills may be valuable.

Relationships: What existing community relationships may help facilitate broadband planning?

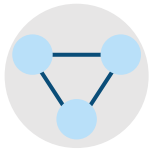
Broadband planning is a community-wide effort that will rely on existing and new relationships. Consider relationships your community has with utilities companies, the Tribal Historic Preservation Office, the Tribal Employment Rights Office, community anchor institutions, government agencies, network providers, and other relevant groups.

Funding: Are funds available for broadband planning?

Broadband planning is a capital-intensive effort that may require your tribal entity to apply for funding to support implementation. Tribal entities should consider funding from multiple sources, including but not limited to: grants, philanthropic contributions, and private-public partnerships.

Local Context: What elements of your local tribal norms affect broadband planning?

Competing community priorities or other aspects specific to your tribal community may impact the timing or speed of broadband plan implementation.



Assemble a Team

Build a team with the skills needed to accomplish your broadband goals.

Worksheet Objectives

- Figure out what skills you need on your team to be successful
- Identify people to join your team
- Select a team member to lead your broadband project

Build a Team that Matches Your Goals

The composition of your broadband team should reflect what your community is trying to enable with broadband. The sample goals below show how what you are trying to accomplish may affect who is on your planning team.

If your goal is to **attract and promote local business...**



Increase representatives from your district leaders, small business administration, and tourism-focused groups

If your goal is to **improve public safety...**



Add representatives from police, fire, and emergency departments, as well as from communities with public safety challenges

If your goal is to **strengthen the workforce...**



Include representatives from nonprofits, tribal government programs, and librarians who focus on this topic

If your goal is to **enhance educational outcomes...**



Bring in representatives from tribal schools and universities – including teachers, professors, administrators, and students

If your goal is to **bolster digital health capacity...**

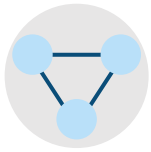


Involve representatives from tribal health clinics, pharmacies, third-party billing providers, Indian Health Services, and other relevant entities

Identify Community Advocates

Before building your team, think about the major figures and institutions in your community. Where do the strongest relationships exist? Who will be most helpful to you on your broadband journey? See *Building Relationships for Success* for additional resources and materials to help identify and develop meaningful partnerships with community actors.

Community Input Moment: Use this step as an opportunity to obtain and incorporate community input on how you put together your broadband team.



Assemble a Team

Build a team with the skills needed to accomplish your broadband goals.

Roles & Responsibilities Table

Broadband planning teams require a range of skillsets. Do you have a well-rounded team with the right people to take on some of the key responsibilities below? Are there other responsibilities for which you need to “staff”? Use this table to develop your dream team.

- 1 Look at the roles you will likely need on your team. Add any roles that might be missing.
- 2 Think about the core responsibilities for each role. Add responsibilities you will need, including for new roles.
- 3 Write in the name of someone who can fill this role for your team.

TEAM ROLE	RESPONSIBILITIES	TEAM MEMBER
Internal project champion	Sponsors and drives planning activities forward	
Project manager	Sets meeting agenda and organizes team dynamics	
Administrative assistant	Organizes team documentation and resources	
Financial manager	Manages team budget, funding, and financial planning	
Technical and policy expert(s)	Provides subject matter expertise on broadband-related matters	
Data Expert	Provides data collection, management, and control expertise	
Outreach coordinator	Leads outreach to tribal community members	
Liaison to federal, state, and local partners	Leads outreach to federal, state, and local partners	

 You can add in more roles and other information for team members by navigating to the *Assemble a Team* tab in the accompanying Tribal Broadband Plan template.



Determine Your Priorities

Create a set of priorities to help your community build or expand meaningful access to broadband.

Worksheet Objectives

- Understand the basic concepts behind broadband access and use
- Think through barriers that prevent meaningful broadband access
- Identify where to focus your broadband plan to address barriers in your community

Understanding Broadband Connectivity

Full and meaningful access to broadband means having both (1) the **physical infrastructure** in place to support broadband connectivity and (2) digital equity and inclusion strategies to support widespread internet **use and adoption** throughout the community. When looking to bring broadband to your community, you can think about infrastructure and broadband use and adoption as two sides of the same coin. While **barriers exist** on the path to full broadband connectivity, anticipating those that are most common can help your community overcome roadblocks and successfully plan for broadband.

	INFRASTRUCTURE	USE AND ADOPTION
Definition	Broadband availability refers to the existence of physical infrastructure to order and secure fast and reliable broadband. This means that internet service meets standards for high-speed service set by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).	Broadband use and adoption refers to whether community members use and have equitable access to available broadband in the community. Broadband use and adoption promotes digital equity and inclusion, and encompasses topics such as digital literacy, skills training, and service and device affordability.
Common Barriers	Infrastructure Availability Lack of existing infrastructure for high-speed internet can limit wide-spread broadband availability for your community or region. Speed The FCC defines high-speed service at 25/3 Megabits per second (Mbps), with download speeds of at least 25 Mbps and upload speeds of at least 3 Mbps. Many ISPs only offer lower speeds in some areas, which can limit broad access to high-speed internet.	Cost High or unpredictable costs for internet service can impede access and equitable use of broadband. Skills and Training Community members may need additional skills to use the internet safely and effectively. Relevance Members may not readily see the relevance of the internet to their daily lives. Devices and Applications Devices can be prohibitively expensive, incompatible with certain networks, and expose users to security vulnerabilities.



Determine Your Priorities

Create a set of priorities to help your community build or expand meaningful access to broadband.

Looking at Broadband in the Community

As you begin to develop your broadband plan, you will need to gather information on broadband availability and use throughout your community. Use the guiding questions below to facilitate a conversation with different members of your community to learn about how broadband is used.

	GUIDING QUESTIONS
<i>Infrastructure</i>	• Is there an Internet Service Provider (ISP) that currently serves your area? • If so, do levels of service meet high-speed standards? • Are the speed offerings uniform throughout the community? • If there is not an ISP that services your area, is the necessary infrastructure in place to deploy broadband?
<i>Use and Adoption</i>	• Where do people use the internet (e.g., home, work, community institutions), and what equipment do they use (e.g., home computer, smartphone, computer center)? • Do any of the above entities (e.g., community institutions) provide free internet access? • What proportion of community members have internet subscriptions? • Are internet service subscriptions considered affordable? • Do digital literacy (e.g., computer skills, internet browser skills, job search skills) trainings exist to help those unfamiliar with using the internet? • Where broadband access exists, do community members use it regularly? If not, why not?



You can track conversations and responses to these guiding questions by navigating to the *Determine Your Priorities* tab in the accompanying Tribal Broadband Plan template.

Exploring the Data

As you talk with community members and groups about their internet use, see where consistent pain points and service gaps emerge. Your broadband plan will want to address and prioritize these areas to promote meaningful and equitable access throughout the community. To learn more, your broadband team will also likely need to analyze broadband data to better understand the extent of coverage and current use and develop a plan that sets reasonable and attainable benchmarks on the road toward full broadband coverage. In cases where data is limited or not available, draw on insights from discussions with community members or other community-based research to complement quantitative data you do have.

For more on analyzing broadband data, see the *Explore the Data* worksheet.



Explore the Data

Measure current broadband availability and use in your community.

Worksheet Objectives

- Explore data sources that provide insight into what broadband looks like in your community
- Learn how to measure your community's current internet usage and access

Data as a Foundation for Your Broadband Plan

Key to any broadband plan is having a clear understanding of your community's broadband availability and any significant gaps. Exploring data sources will provide you with quantitative insights to measure your community's current broadband availability and chart where you aim to go.

NTIA DATA SOURCES	The NTIA Digital Nation Data Explorer, produced in partnership with the U.S. Census Bureau, provides comprehensive data on internet and device use in the U.S. The survey captures information on the adoption of different types of devices and internet access technologies, locations of internet use, online activities, and challenges preventing some Americans from taking full advantage of the internet. See the Digital Nation Data Explorer page for this data. NTIA's Indicators of Broadband Need (IBN) Map displays areas across the country that lack access to high-quality internet. Users can filter for various indicators of need (e.g., speed, usage, device access, internet access) and can view the data with the geographies of tribal lands layered on top. See the IBN Map page for this data.
FEDERAL DATA SOURCES	The American Community Survey (ACS), administered by the U.S. Census Bureau, releases new data every year with vital information about the people living in the U.S. Relevant data for broadband planning includes households' Type of Computer, Internet Access, and Type of Internet Subscription. See the Subject Tables S2801 and S2802 on the Census ACS website for this data. The FCC's Form 477 Broadband Deployment Data provides ISP-reported information for each census block across the United States. The census block data includes: the name of the ISP, the technology it offers, and its advertised upload and download speeds. With the Area Summary function, users can see data on speeds and number of providers for tribal areas. See the Form 477 page for this data.
SPEED TESTS	Speedtest by Ookla is a commercial platform that tests your personal upload and download speeds, as well as latency and retransmission rates in a network. Ookla has limited public reporting, but detailed data is available for purchase and download. See the Ookla Speedtest for this data. M-Lab by Measurement Lab tests your upload speed, download speed, latency rate, and retransmission rate. The data collected is available to the public for download and analysis. See the M-Lab test for this data.



Explore the Data

Measure current broadband availability and use in your community.

Select the Metrics that Matter to You

The various broadband data sources provide a wealth of information. Which topics are most important to you? Check the boxes of the topics you will explore more for your broadband plan, and then use the accompanying Tribal Broadband Plan template in Excel to organize and analyze the data you source.

TOPIC	SOURCE	DESCRIPTION
☐ Service Provided	IBN	Displays areas where no provider reports offering service at 25/3
	FCC	Displays number of fixed broadband providers in an area Lists providers that offer services for a specific location, based on address
☐ Internet Access	IBN	Displays areas where 25% or more of households report no internet access
	ACS	Displays how many households report an internet subscription Of households that report an internet subscription, displays what type
	NTIA Data Explorer	Of households that use internet, displays proportion of households with each type of internet service
☐ Speed*	IBN	Displays areas that have speeds below 25/3
	FCC	Displays how many providers provide service at various speeds in an area
	Speedtest & M-Lab	Allows you to conduct your own speed test
☐ Devices	IBN	Displays areas where 25% or more of households report no computer, smartphone, or tablet use
	ACS	Displays how many households report having a computer Of households that report having a computer device, displays what type
	NTIA Data Explorer	Displays percentage of individuals that use different types of digital devices
☐ Activity & Location of Use	NTIA Data Explorer	Displays percentage of individuals who use the internet to do various activities
		Displays percentage of individuals who use the internet at various locations

* Note: The Indicators of Broadband Need (IBN) map incorporates data from the American Community Survey (ACS) and the FCC data sources detailed on the previous page. Speed data can refer to both advertised speeds and actual delivery speeds.

Building Complete Data

While federal data sources provide insight into broadband coverage and use, they may have gaps that limit your ability to gather data about your tribal community. State and local broadband data sources or qualitative community research (see the *Determine Your Priorities* worksheet) can be valuable complements to federal sources. Over time, your team may seek to use combinations of these datasets and research approaches to collect and maintain independent datasets on broadband in your community.



Build Relationships for Success

Identify partners to engage throughout the broadband planning process.

Worksheet Objectives

- Consider partnerships often involved in the broadband planning process
- Identify partners to engage throughout planning and project implementation

Consider Local Partners

When you are building a broadband plan, it is important to think through partners who are commonly involved in the process. While each community will have specific partners to engage, below are some examples of partners often involved in broadband planning.

PARTNER TYPE	EXAMPLES
Government	➤ Tribal government members and leaders ➤ City and county leaders, administrators, and officials ➤ State and Federal legislators and officials ➤ Public safety personnel ➤ Other (write in a group or individual role with this distinction in your community): _____
Private	➤ Internet service providers (ISPs) ➤ Wireless service providers ➤ Utilities companies ➤ Transportation facilities ➤ Other (write in a group or individual role with this distinction in your community): _____
Business	➤ Tribal business leaders ➤ Chamber of commerce members ➤ Technical leaders ➤ Other (write in a group or individual role with this distinction in your community): _____
Institutional	➤ Educational administrators, school board members, parents, and students ➤ Economic development organizations and workforce development staff ➤ Librarians ➤ Other (write in a group or individual role with this distinction in your community): _____
Philanthropic	➤ Nonprofits ➤ Faith-based leaders ➤ Other (write in a group or individual role with this distinction in your community): _____
Residents	➤ Tribal citizens and residents ➤ Other (write in a group or individual role with this distinction in your community): _____



Build Relationships for Success

Identify partners to engage throughout the broadband planning process.

How to Engage Different Partners

As you identify partners involved in the broadband planning process, you will likely need to work with different types of partners in different ways.



Make

Partners who will help you develop the broadband plan



Decide

Partners who will approve broadband plan choices



Inform

Partners who are helpful to keep updated on plan developments

Identify Partners

Use the table below to think through how you will engage different partners on your broadband plan. Write in partners in each box to note how you will need to work with them.

CATEGORIES	MAKE	DECIDE	INFORM
Government			
Private			
Business			
Institutional			
Philanthropic			
Residents			



You can capture more extensive information for managing partnerships by navigating to the *Build Relationships for Success* tab in the accompanying Tribal Broadband Plan template.



Select the Right Solutions

Determine the specific methods to use to reach your broadband goals.

Worksheet Objectives

- Evaluate options to execute your plan, including technology or programs
- Explore funding options available to support the plan execution

Align with Your Goals

The solutions you select to implement your broadband plan will depend on your community's unique broadband goals. Whether you're planning a broadband infrastructure project, a broadband use and adoption project, a combination of the two, or something else entirely, there is no single "right" solution. To help think through your options, consider your community's existing barriers and how each option addresses those barriers. (See *Determine Your Priorities* for more information on broadband infrastructure, use, and adoption.)

Evaluate the Options

While each community's broadband solutions will differ, below are some examples and guiding questions to help you evaluate potential paths forward.

INFRASTRUCTURE TECHNOLOGIES

Infrastructure projects can increase internet availability within your community, but construction is often capital-intensive.

- The main types of broadband service are **Fiber Optic**, **Cable**, **DSL**, and **Fixed Wireless** each of which vary in terms of the potential network capacity and cost. Read more about the differences in these technologies in the *Key Terms & Resources*.

What technology is right for you? Ask yourself:

- Which technologies are compatible with the terrain in your community?
- What is your population density?
- How much capacity will users need? How do capacity needs differ across the community?

USE AND ADOPTION PROGRAMS

Your solution to boost adoption or expand public access should trace back to your community's unique priorities and needs. Potential solutions include:

- Provide **digital literacy training** on basic computer use, internet search, and other key abilities.
- Offer access to devices and internet connection through a **Public Computer Center (PCC)**.
- Lower cost burdens via **discounts or subsidies**.

Which program will address your goals? Ask yourself:

- What population are you trying to serve, and which programs best address their needs?
- What community institutions could collaborate on implementation (e.g., house a PCC)?
- Do existing programs or ISPs offer discounts to certain populations?



Select the Right Solutions

Determine the specific methods to use to reach your broadband goals.



Community Input Moment: Use this step as an opportunity to speak directly with broadband providers and equipment suppliers about options available to your community. Also, reach out to other communities about which technology and services they chose and what factors were important in their decision.

Identify Potential Federal Funding Sources

Regardless of the solution you choose, it will be important to think about how you will fund the solution. Federal funding, state funding, and private or philanthropic investment are all options available to consider. To explore federal funding options to finance your broadband project, use the [BroadbandUSA FY21 Interactive Federal Funding Guide](#) (available for download). Use the table below to write in the funding programs applicable to you and that you plan to explore.

INSTRUCTIONS TO NAVIGATE THE INTERACTIVE FEDERAL FUNDING GUIDE

- 1 Open the document and click "Begin"
- 2 Click to view "All Eligible Entities"
- 3 Click to view "Tribal/Native American Government, Alaska Native Controlled Organizations, and Native Hawaiian Organizations"
- 4 Click the relevant Program Purpose(s) for your community to view funding opportunities

PROGRAM	DEPARTMENT	FED. AGENCY/BUREAU	IMPORTANT DATES



You can capture more extensive information for selecting solutions and funding options by navigating to the *Select the Right Solutions* tab in the accompanying Tribal Broadband Plan template.



Prepare a Budget

Set a budget for the various expenses included in your broadband plan.

Worksheet Objectives

- Detail the expenses that your broadband plan will include
- Consider various cost options and provide justification for each cost that you select

Understand Your Costs

A clear understanding of all the expenses required to execute your broadband plan will allow you to properly plan financially. Below is a framework for thoughtfully considering the costs associated with your broadband plan.

1

CATALOG YOUR EXPENSES

What expenses do you expect to incur when executing your plan?

A broadband plan will include a multitude of costs, including those not directly related to building infrastructure or purchasing equipment. By listing out all anticipated expenses, you can align on which items need to be in your budget. Expenses will vary depending on the type of project you are planning and the phase of that project. Typical phases are:

Pre-Construction

Costs incurred when planning your project

Construction

Expenses for constructing and/or executing your project

Sustainability + Operations

Ongoing expenses to sustain your project

2

ESTIMATE THE COSTS

How much will each item cost?

Prices for each item could vary greatly depending on quality, quantity, vendors, and timing. To be cost-effective, do some research to understand the various price points for your expected expenses. As part of your research, get quotes from vendors, discuss with other communities who have budgeted for broadband plans, and consider the implications of one-time costs, such as construction materials, versus recurring costs, such as wages and maintenance.

3

JUSTIFY EACH EXPENSE

Which items will you plan to pay for, and why?

Based on your pricing research, select the items you will include in your budget. During this process, it is important to thoroughly think through your reasoning for your budget decisions, as many funding opportunities will require you to provide budget justifications. *Why are you choosing one option over another? Are all your expenses necessary for the success of your project, and if so, why?*



Prepare a Budget

Set a budget for the various expenses included in your broadband plan.

Direct and Indirect Costs

Budgets often contain both direct and indirect costs related to a broadband plan. Direct costs are expenses incurred specifically to further a specific objective of your broadband plan, such as construction materials for an infrastructure project or routers and modems for a digital equity and inclusion initiative. Indirect costs are expenses incurred for common or shared plan objectives and that can't be readily assigned to any one objective, such as administrative costs. Consider both direct and indirect costs when setting your budget.

Keep in mind that you may need to negotiate an indirect cost rate if your plan includes indirect costs and you are receiving a federal grant or other federal funding.

Elements of a Budget

Your budget should include itemized costs, quantities, and timeframes as applicable, as well as cost justifications that explain why the specific item is needed. Use the space below to begin to plot out your budget elements, then turn to the Tribal Broadband Plan template in Excel when you are ready to prepare your budget in more detail.

ITEM

Be as specific as possible when itemizing your costs. For each item in your final budget, include details such as model, brand, vendor, and any other specifications as appropriate.

QUANTITY / TIMEFRAME

For one-time cost items, such as devices, include the quantity you will need. For recurring expenses, such as rent or salaries, include the timeframe over which you will be paying that expense.

JUSTIFICATION

Provide the rationale for each item. This justification could include its purpose, team member(s) that will use it, vendor, time frame it will be needed, as well as any other relevant information.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The elements above will feed into your budget narrative. The budget narrative provides information about line items in your budget and explains how associated expenses further the objectives of your broadband plan.

 You can capture more extensive information for preparing a budget by navigating to the *Prepare a Budget* tab in the accompanying Tribal Broadband Plan template.



Chart a Path Forward

Develop a project plan to guide execution of your broadband plan.

Worksheet Objective

- Create a customized project plan to execute your broadband vision

Create a Project Plan

Developing a project plan can help your tribal entity plan and organize the steps necessary to execute your broadband vision. A good project plan lays out a clear path to implement your project by setting milestones, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and aligning your team around shared expectations and targets.

A project plan often includes some of the components below. Think through which components may be helpful for your tribal entity to include in your project plan.

PROJ. PLAN COMPONENT	DEFINITION	QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER
Project Objective	Measurable outcomes that serve as the organizing framework of your broadband plan. Objectives help to make sure that activities match up with what you are trying to achieve.	<i>What discrete objectives does your broadband project set out to achieve?</i>
Key Activities	Main efforts and actions necessary to achieve your tribal entity's broadband plan. Each key activity should align to a project objective, with multiple activities for each objective.	<i>What activities need to occur to achieve your objective? In what order do they need to happen?</i>
Point(s) of Contact (POC)	Individual or individuals responsible for successful execution of an activity.	<i>Who is responsible for implementation of the activity?</i>
Timeline (Start Date, End Date)	Estimated start and end dates of key activities. These should be realistic but targeted to keep your tribal entity's broadband plan on schedule.	<i>When does the activity need to be completed? Working backwards, what start dates do you need to meet that end date?</i>
Status	Status of an activity (e.g., not started, on schedule, behind schedule, complete).	<i>What is the status of the activity?</i>
Risks	Possible roadblocks which may prevent or delay an activity from being executed.	<i>What are risks to completing the activity?</i>



Chart a Path Forward

Develop a project plan to guide execution of your broadband plan.

A Living Document

A project plan can be updated throughout implementation to reflect the changing realities of your project. To make sure the plan serves as a “living document,” it is important to assign a project plan manager who is responsible for keeping the project plan up-to-date and identifying challenges to implementation.

Support Successful Implementation

A project plan can run into a host of challenges throughout design and implementation. Below are common challenges and potential mitigation strategies.

Common Challenge

Lack of ownership and implementation of project plan activities and the project plan overall can hinder progress and render the workplan as outdated and obsolete rather than a living tool to track implementation.

Unclear milestones and vague roles and responsibilities can limit coordination and progress on project plan activities and milestones.

Irregularity in updates to the plan can result in a project plan that is out of date.

What are challenges you see for your broadband plan?

Mitigation Strategy

☒ **Identify and assign a project plan manager** who is responsible for collecting updates from activity points of contact, including activity status, updates to target completion dates, and associated risks.

☒ **Touch base frequently with activity points of contact** to obtain buy-in on project plan activities and clarify how the team can work together for execution.

☒ **Establish a regular cadence** to update the project plan, elevate risks, and propose mitigation strategies to keep activities on track.

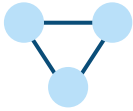
☒ ***How can these challenges be mitigated?***



You can begin to build out your project plan by navigating to the *Chart a Path Forward* tab in the accompanying Tribal Broadband Plan template.

Broadband Planning Checklist (1/2)

Ready to finalize your broadband plan? Use the checklist below to confirm you have all the components in place to move forward.



Assemble a Team

- ☐ Have you identified a team with the skills necessary to execute your broadband plan?
- ☐ Do any gaps exist on your team where certain skills are needed?
- ☐ Have you defined the roles and responsibilities for each team member?



Determine Your Priorities

- ☐ Did you engage your tribal community to conduct a qualitative assessment of broadband in your community?
- ☐ Did you begin to identify gaps in broadband availability and access in your tribal community?
- ☐ Have you identified your tribal entity's broadband priorities with respect to broadband infrastructure, use, and adoption?



Explore the Data

- ☐ Did you identify federal data sources that provide data for your tribal community?
- ☐ Did you investigate state or other sources to fill any gaps in federal data sources?
- ☐ If gaps still exist, did you identify a means or source of funding to help gather necessary data?



Build Relationships for Success

- ☐ Have you identified partners that could support your broadband planning efforts?
- ☐ Have you determined which partners will help *make*, *decide*, and *inform* parts of your broadband plan?

Broadband Planning Checklist (2/2)

Ready to finalize your broadband plan? Use the checklist below to confirm you have all the components in place to move forward.



Select the Right Solutions

- ☐ Did you evaluate the various options for either infrastructure technologies or digital equity and inclusion programs and select the one(s) most appropriate for your tribal community?
- ☐ Did you identify funding opportunities that could support the infrastructure technologies or digital equity and inclusion programs you've identified?
- ☐ Do you have the documentation required to apply to these funding opportunities?



Prepare a Budget

- ☐ Have you spoken to another community or tribal entity to learn how they approached the budgeting process?
- ☐ Have you gotten quotes from different vendors to find the most appropriate cost options?
- ☐ Have you provided appropriate justification details for items and resources outlined in your budget?



Chart a Path Forward

- ☐ Do you have the appropriate activities and timelines identified for your project plan?
- ☐ Have you confirmed points of contact for each project activity?
- ☐ Are there any gaps in your project plan that need to be filled before implementation?

Key Terms & Resources

Want to learn and read more? Use this section for a list of common terms and additional resources to help your tribal entity on its broadband journey.

General Terms

An overview of broadband terminology to familiarize yourself with the basics.

Broadband: Commonly refers to high-speed internet access that is always on and faster than traditional dial-up access. Broadband includes several high-speed transmission technologies, such as fiber, wireless, satellite, digital subscriber line and cable. For the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), broadband capability requires consumers to have access to actual download speeds of at least 25 Mbps and actual upload speeds of at least 3 Mbps.

Broadband Adoption: The use of broadband in places where it is available, measured as the percentage of households that use broadband in such areas.

Digital Divide: The gap between those of a populace that have access to the internet and other communications technologies and those that have limited or no access.

Digital Equity: Parity in digital access and digital skills that are now required for full participation in many aspects of society and the economy. Digital equity links digital inclusion to social justice and highlights that a lack of access and/or skills can further isolate individuals and communities from a broad range of opportunities.

Digital Inclusion: Access by individuals and communities to robust broadband connections; internet-enabled devices that meet user needs; and the skills to explore, create, and collaborate in the digital world. Digital inclusion programs can be used to promote digital equity.

Digital Literacy: The ability to leverage current technologies, such as smartphones and laptops, and internet access to perform research, create content, and interact with the world.

Broadband Technologies

The transmission of data over a high-speed internet connection can occur through various technology media.

Cable: Terrestrial broadband service provided over coaxial cable, leveraging the same infrastructure that provides cable TV services. Cable broadband speeds are dependent on the technology standard deployed (Data Over Cable System Interface Specification; DOCSIS) in the network.

Digital Subscriber Line (DSL): A form of technology that utilizes a two-wire copper telephone line to allow users to simultaneously connect to and operate the internet and the telephone network without disrupting either connection.

Fiber: A flexible hair-thin glass or plastic strand that is capable of transmitting large amounts of data at high transfer rates as pulses or waves of light.

Fixed Wireless: A technology that combines fiber and wireless infrastructure to provide last mile broadband service. Data travels over a fiber network and then over the air through towers, similar to how cellphones work to a receiver at the home.

Satellite: Wireless internet beamed down from satellites orbiting the Earth. Satellite internet is either offered through Geostationary satellites that orbit high above earth or Low Earth Orbit satellites, a newer technology that utilizes more satellites lower in Earth's orbit.

Key Terms & Resources

Want to learn and read more? Use this section for a list of common terms and additional resources to help your tribal entity on its broadband journey.

Funding Sources

Funding for a broadband project can come from many a range of public and private sources.

Federal Sources: Various federal agencies like the Department of Commerce offer broadband grants to tribal governments. The [BroadbandUSA Federal Funding Guide](#) connects users to various funding opportunities that support broadband planning, digital inclusion, and deployment projects. The site allows you to filter programs by program purposes, eligible entities, and relevant agencies and departments.

State Sources: Many states provide broadband grants for tribal entities in their respective constituencies. BroadbandUSA compiles information on [State Broadband Programs](#) across all 50 states, including potential state funding opportunities.

Private Sources: Private entities will sometimes partner with local governments in public-private partnerships that fund broadband projects. In these agreements, local governments and private entities may share associated costs, risks, and profits from building and maintaining a broadband network.

Data Sources

Resources to help measure current broadband availability and use in your community.

American Community Survey Data: Releases new data every year with vital information about the people living in the United States. Relevant data for broadband planning includes households' Type of Computer, Internet Access, and Type of Internet Subscription. See the Subject Tables S2801 and S2802 on the [Census ACS website](#) for this data.

FCC Fixed Broadband Deployment Map: Provides a visualization of the residential fixed broadband deployment data collected on FCC Form 477, which gathers ISP-reported information for each census block across the United States.

M-Lab by Measurement Lab: Tests your upload speed, download speed, latency rate, and retransmission rate. The data collected is available to the public for download and analysis.

NTIA Indicators of Broadband Need: Displays areas across the country that lack access to high-quality internet. Users can filter for various indicators of need (e.g., speed, usage, device access, internet access) and can view the data with the geographies of tribal lands layered on top.

NTIA Internet Use Survey Data Explorer: Provides comprehensive data on internet and device use in the U.S., including information on the adoption of different types of devices and internet access technologies, locations of internet use, online activities, and challenges that prevent people from taking full advantage of the internet.

Speedtest by Ookla: Commercial platform that tests your personal upload and download speeds, as well as latency and retransmission rates in a network. Ookla has limited public reporting, but detailed data is available for purchase and download.

Explore additional BroadbandUSA resources online:



www.broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov



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About Us: The U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) promotes innovation and economic growth by working to expand broadband connectivity and use across America