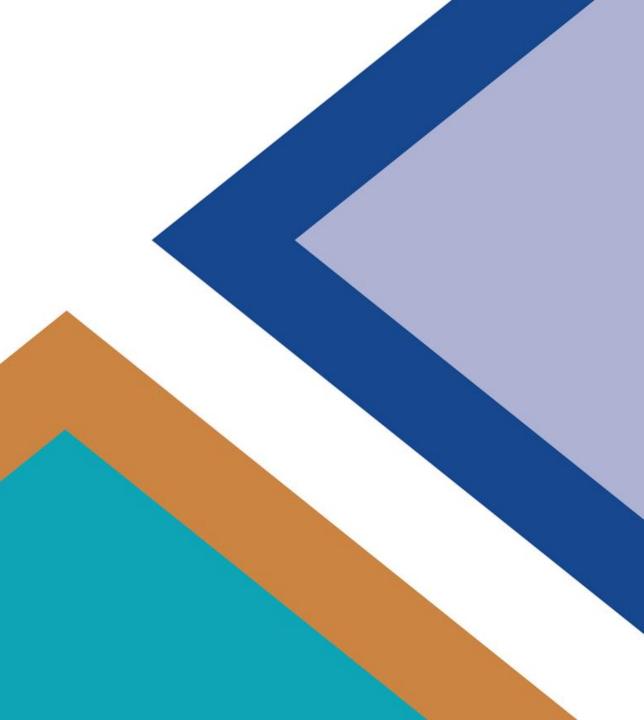


AMERIND Critical Infrastructure: *Tribes Connecting Tribes* 

**Irene Flannery** 

**Director, ACI** 

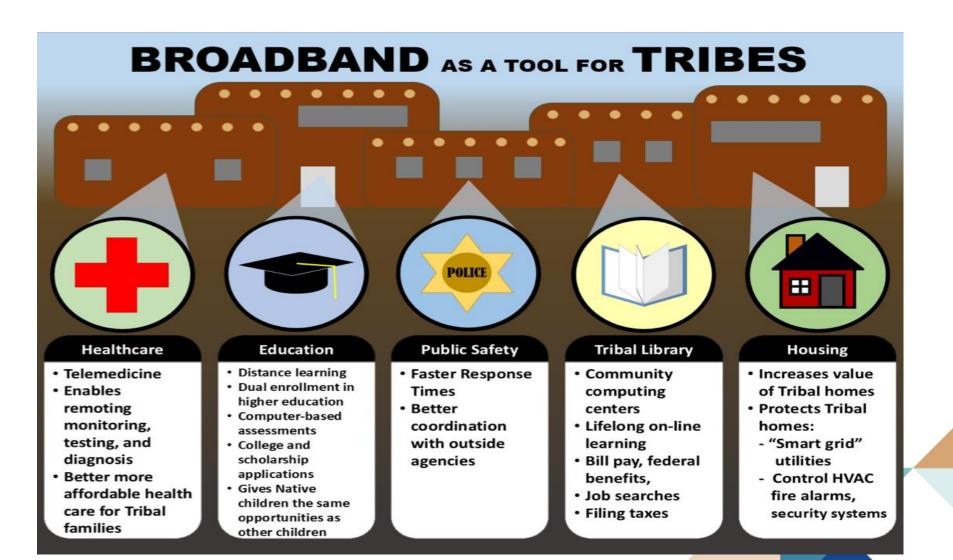


## Introduction





## **Broadband in the Community**



# 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 <u>rural</u> 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

#### **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)

#### Phone connectivity at home

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

# Federal Funding – Federal Communications Commission

### **The Universal Service Fund – Annual Budgets**



Reduced rates for telecom and broadband services to eligible low-income consumers



#### HIGH COST PROGRAM

Reduced rates for telecom and broadband services in eligible high-cost areas



#### SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES PROGRAM

Funding for telecom and broadband services to eligible schools and libraries



#### RURAL HEALTH CARE PROGRAM

Funding for telecom and broadband services to eligible rural health care providers

\$2.25B

\$4.5B

\$4.15B

\$571M

\* only program with a Tribai-specific component

\*\* Tribai TANF is a qualifying program

## **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?

**Irene Flannery** 

**Director, AMERIND Critical Infrastructure** 

iflannery@AMERIND.com

202-262-4549 (mobile)

505-404-5010 (office)