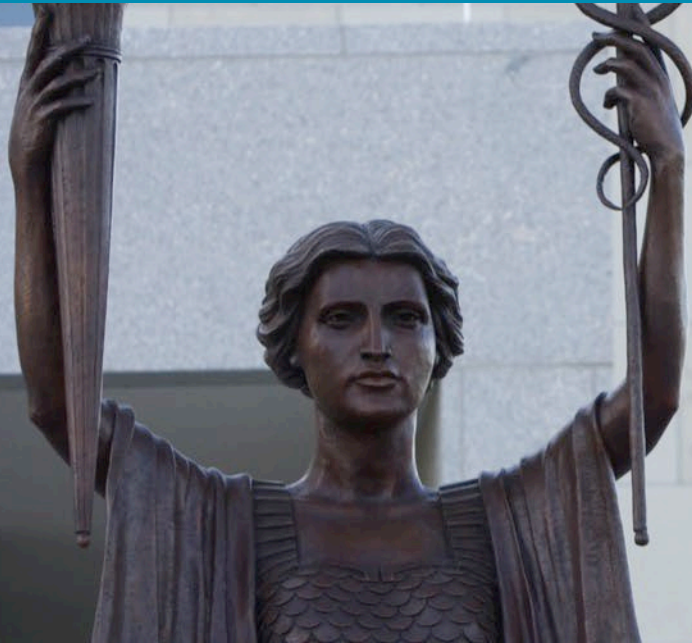


Investing in Digital Inclusion: New Strategies for Closing the Digital Divide



Which best describes you:

- 1) I'm a digital inclusion practitioner; it's core to what I do.
- 2) I'm a frequent partner of digital inclusion organizations.
- 3) I'm somewhat familiar with the topic.
- 4) I'm new to the field.



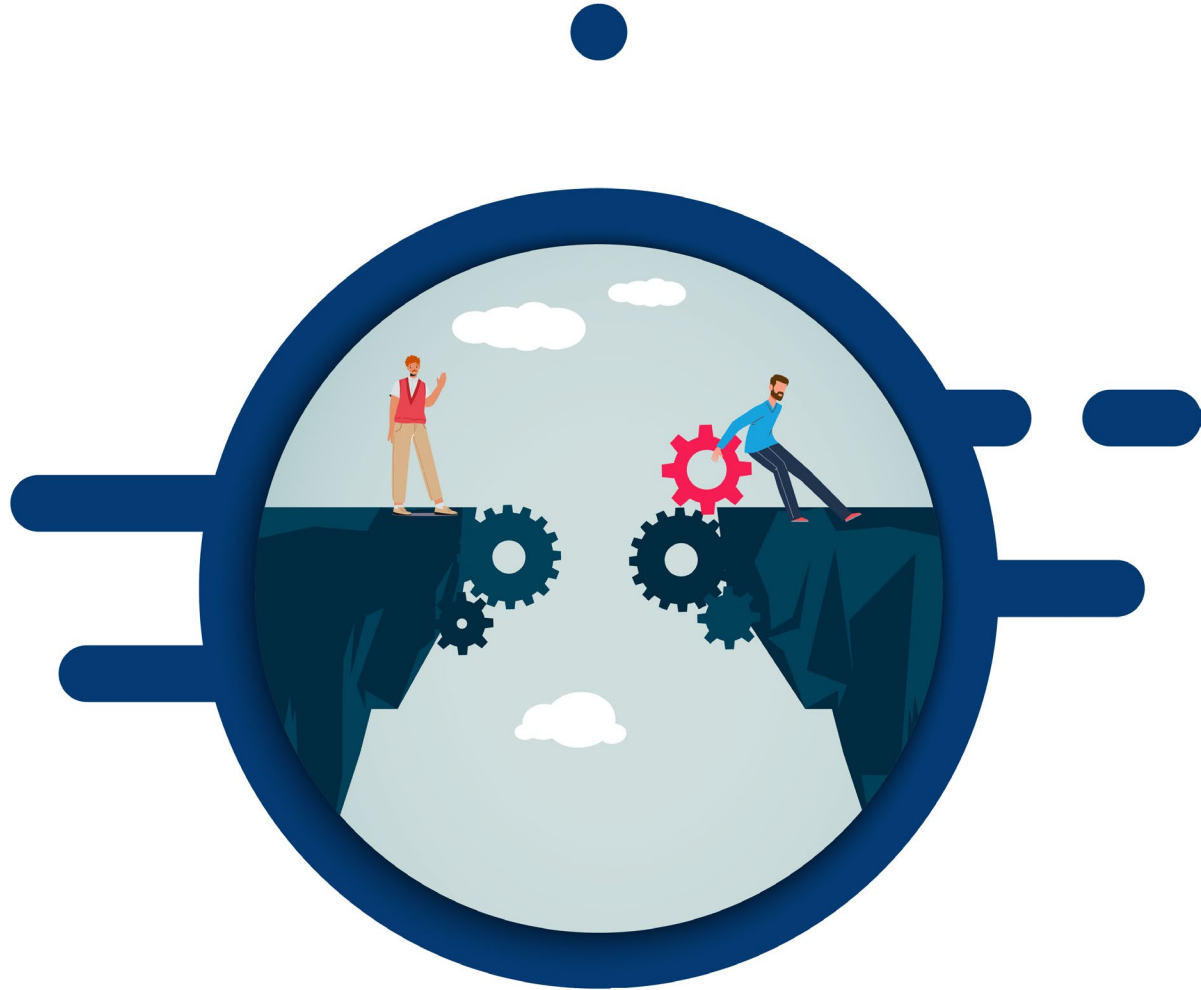
DIGITAL DIVIDE

This is the problem to be solved. It's the gap between those who do and do not have high speed home internet that's reliable and affordable, along with the skills and tools to effectively utilize it.



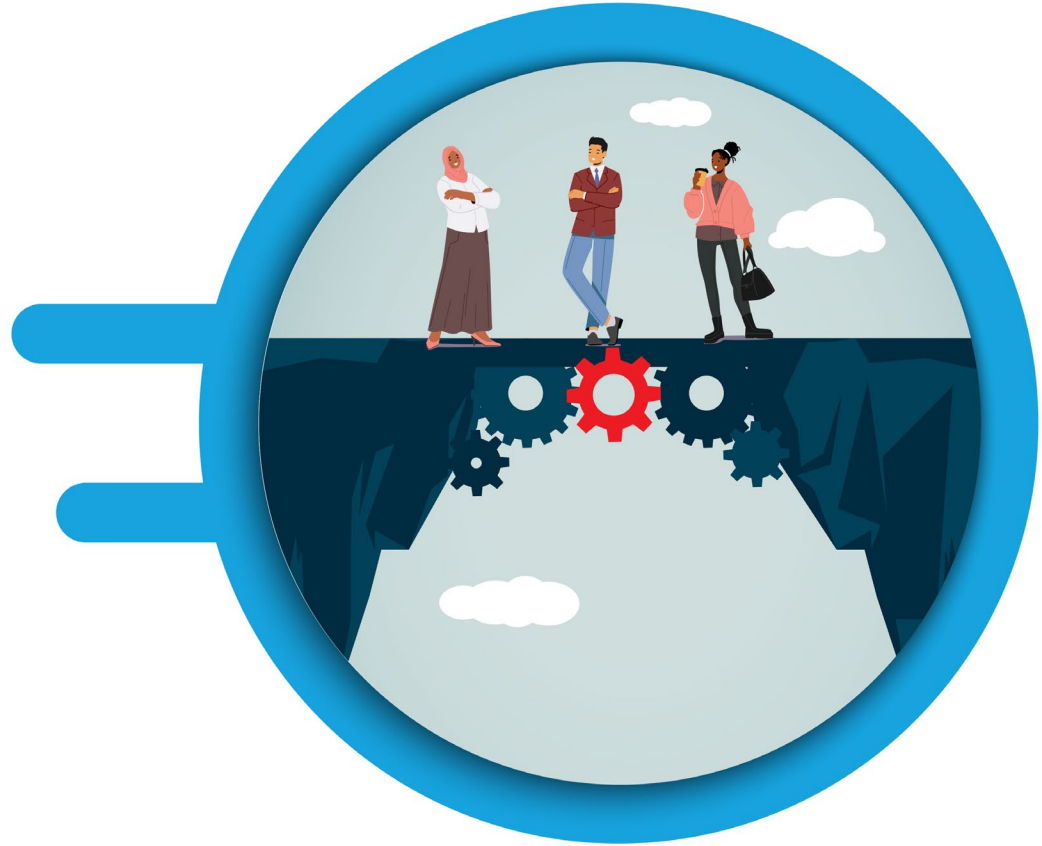
DIGITAL INCLUSION

These are the actions and efforts to bridge the digital divide.



DIGITAL EQUITY

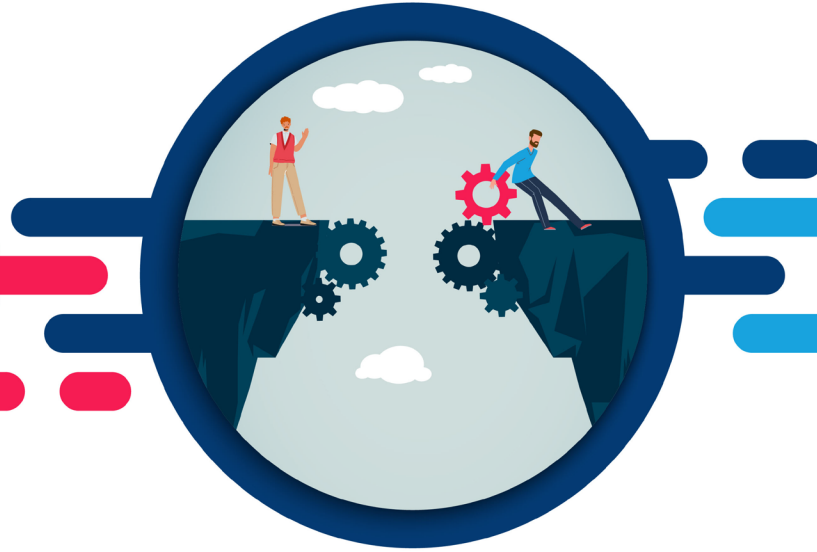
This is the goal, this is where we want to be—where everyone has the technology, access and skills needed to fully participate in our modern economy and society.





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Insights on the disconnected



Francella Ochillo
Executive Director

New(er) Funding Sources



New(er) Funding Sources

Key broadband provisions in infrastructure bill



Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program

This program offers grants to each state for the purpose of expanding broadband deployment in rural and underserved areas.

\$42.45B
Amount allocated



Affordable Connectivity Fund

The "Emergency Broadband Benefit Program" gets renamed the "Affordable Connectivity Program" and requires all internet service plans to be eligible. Households that meet eligibility requirements can receive up to \$30 per month for broadband.

\$14.20B
Amount allocated



Digital Equity Act of 2021

States can submit applications to receive grants for broadband activities by developing "digital equity plans."

\$2.75B
Amount allocated



Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program

A program created in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, which aims to make broadband more accessible to Indigenous communities, gets extended in the infrastructure bill.

\$2.00B
Amount allocated



Middle Mile Grant Program

This grant program aims to reduce costs and connectivity barriers associated with providing broadband access to underserved or unserved areas (defined as those without broadband speeds of 100/20 Mbps).

\$1.00B
Amount allocated

Affordable Connectivity Program Benefits



Up to \$30/month
towards broadband
service from
participating providers



Up to \$75/month
towards broadband
service for households
on tribal lands, including
Hawaiian Home Lands



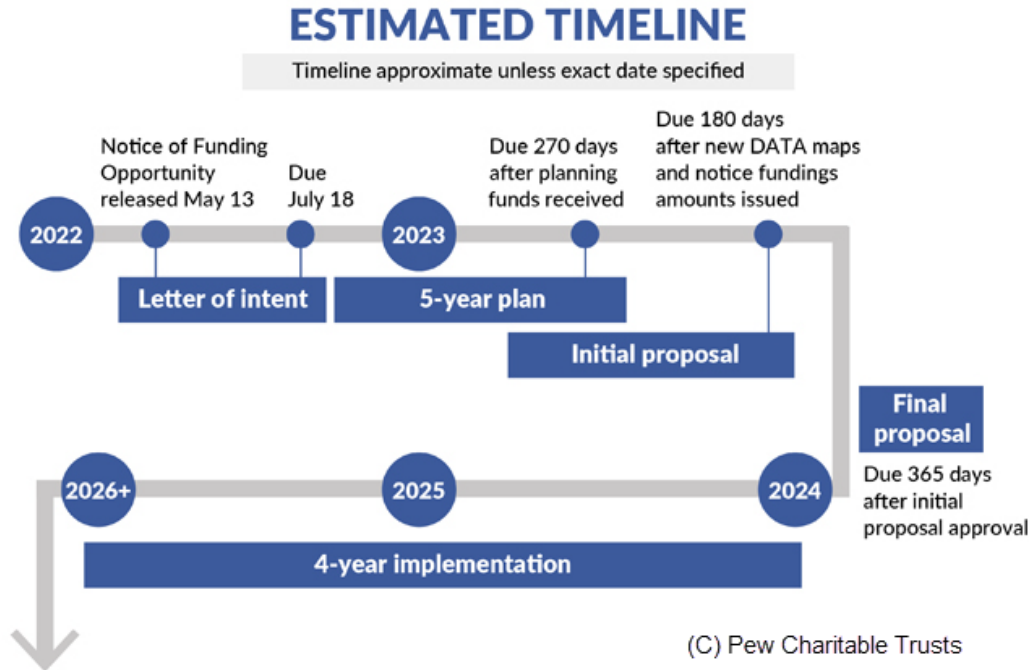
A one-time discount of
up to \$100 to purchase
a laptop, desktop,
computer, or tablet

Broadband Equity Access & Deployment

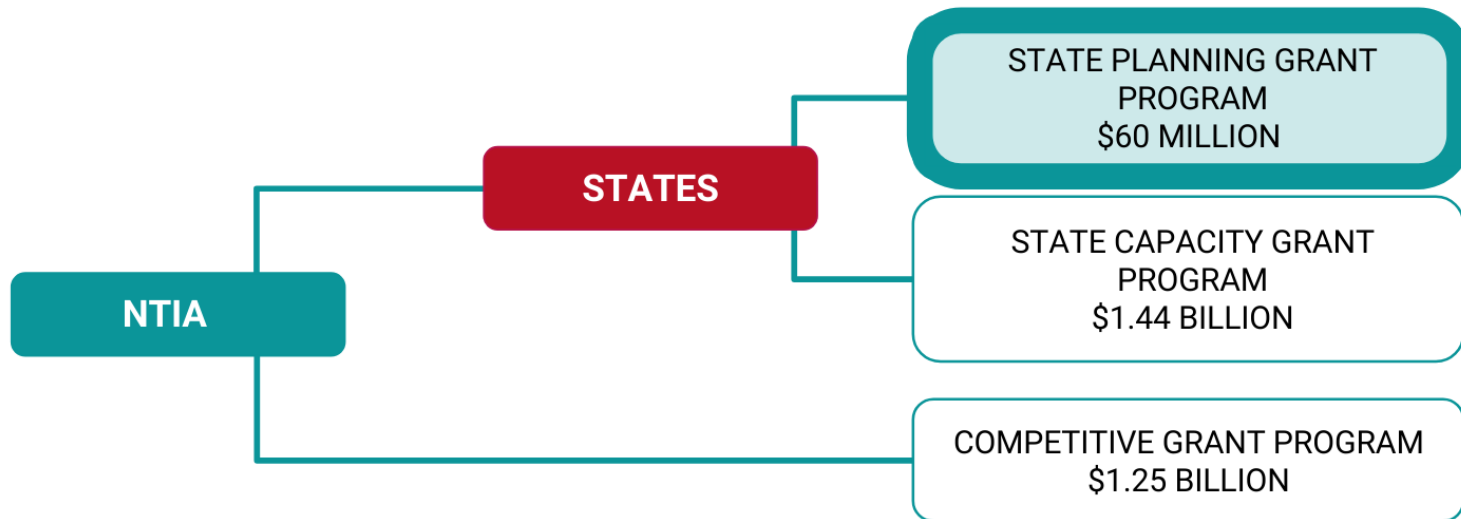
Figure 2

NTIA Expects BEAD Implementation to Take Roughly 4 Years

Estimated timeline for proposal development and funding allocations



Digital Equity Act



Source: DigitalInclusion.Org



“Covered Populations”

1. Households under 150% poverty threshold;
2. Aging individuals
3. Incarcerated individuals, other than in a Federal correctional facility
4. Veterans
5. Individuals with disabilities
6. Individuals with a language barrier (are English learners or with low levels of literacy)
7. Individuals who are members of a racial or ethnic minority group
8. Individuals who primarily reside in a rural area



TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT

IDENTIFY

Acknowledge sovereign status. Research demographics, Tribal programs/orgs, etc. Understand and respect the political culture of tribes, their leadership, and how they are organized. Is there a 101 session that tribes provide?

PLAN - TRIBAL PRIORITY/NEEDS

Understand the the long-term vision for connectivity for the tribe. Find out current plans or projects that are in place. Involve Tribal programs, organizations, and businesses that address critical needs of the tribe.

LAUNCH

Disclose data collection practices and how the information is being used for research and gained knowledge. Discuss ownership and protection of the data.

Insure outreach includes appropriate language, local information hubs, in-person resources, etc.



REFLECTION

Insure your efforts are moving towards sustainability and contributing to the overall development of the tribe.

CAPACITY OF THE TRIBE

Communicate and inform regularly. Insure your efforts are moving towards sustainability of the project. Move beyond performative and move towards being transformative.

SHARE FINDINGS

Give credit to the community and Tribe for continued efforts and successes in the region. Acknowledge your Tribal partners and uplift the work they are doing in their community. Offer next steps and revisit goals and insure they are reciprocal and mutually beneficial.

Digital navigators are trusted guides who address the whole digital inclusion process — home connectivity, devices, and digital skills — with community members through repeated interactions.



Digital Navigators



Find resources:
digitalinclusion.org/dn



**DIGITAL
CONNECT**
an initiative of Gila River Telecommunications Inc.



Digital Navigator Process



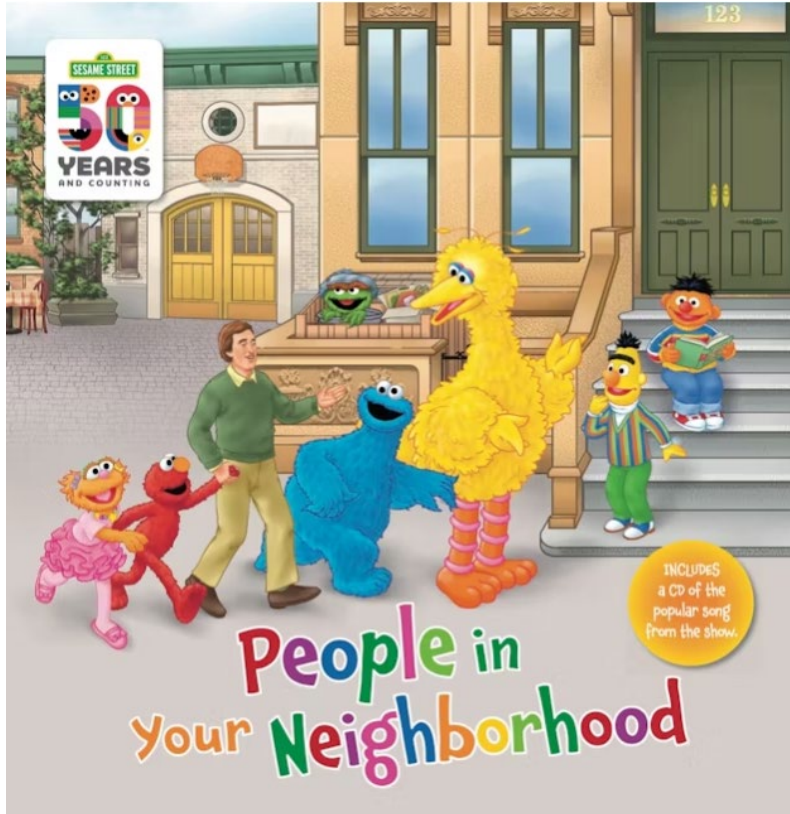


Example:

Abe, digital navigator at Hoopa Valley Tribe, advocating for each person:

“As a Digital Navigator working for an ISP, I am in a unique situation. Learning to navigate the portals we access to enroll subscribers was the biggest challenge as this was new to all of us. I learn something new as I am challenged daily, but I would not have it any other way. The sincere thanks that I get from just one person when I tell them they are qualified for ACP and they will have their internet bill paid ... makes the challenges we went through to get to where we are now worth every gray hair I got along the way.”

Do you know your neighbors?



Have you:

- Met your state broadband/DE office?
- Attended one of their community engagement events?

Connecting the dots



Colin Rhinesmith
Founder and Director