

State Digital Equity Planning Grant Tribal Workshop Transcription

July 5th, 2022

Transcript

I'm going to go ahead and start recording. And with that, I will do a little bit of housekeeping. Good morning. Welcome to the July 5th Digital Equity Planning Grant Tribal Technical Assistance workshop. Today's workshop is in the "Zoom meetings" format, so we respectfully request all attendees to keep their Zoom audio and video muted until called upon during the moderated Q&A portion of the workshop. Please use the chat function if you have a question. Questions will be answered at the end of the roundtable so we can combine similar questions and maximize our time. The chat will be used by hosts to provide links and information referenced during the presentation. A video of this workshop and the slides will be made available on the Broadband for All Portal past events page. A reminder to speakers please cue Fiona to advance your slides when presenting. And with all items of housekeeping addressed, I'd like to introduce Deputy Director of Office of Broadband and Digital literacy, Scott Adams, to introduce our opening speakers. Scott?

Hi, Cole. Thank you very much. As Cole said, I'm Scott Adams, I'm the Deputy Director of Broadband and Digital Literacy. Thank you for allowing us to engage and interact with you today on the digital equity planning grant opportunity that's available at the current moment. I would like to introduce our first speaker, Christina Snider, The Tribal Affairs Secretary. Christina?

Great, my video had a bit of a lag, but good morning everyone and welcome again to today's digital equity planning grant workshop for tribes. My name is Christina Snider and I'm a member of the Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians and the Tribal Affairs Secretary for Governor Gavin Newsom. Before we get started, I'd like to acknowledge that the land that I'm joining you from as the ancestral homelands of the Patreon peoples. Today you will hear from the California Department of Technology and the state's approach in developing a state digital equity plan which requires engagement with tribal governments. And we'll hear from our partners at the National Telecommunications and Information Administration who will provide information, guidance, and support to tribal governments seeking digital equity planning grant funds, including step by step guidance on applying for funding, an easy-to-use application template, and designated time for Q&A and discussion with grant administrators. California is actively pursuing these funds to support our digital equity efforts and augment the efforts that you are undertaking at the regional and local level. We're eager to expand existing partnerships, create new partnerships, and align efforts with yours to achieve Broadband for All in California. As a reminder, we are recording today's meeting for the benefit of California Tribal nations and consortia that were unable to be here today. So, as you engage with the panels today, please remember that we're recording and we encourage you not to share any proprietary or confidential information that you would not want to make publicly available. Now it is

my pleasure to hand it off to Matthew Rantanen, Senior Advisor on tribal broadband for Golden State net to provide some remarks.

Thank you, Christina. As Christina said, I'm Matthew Rantanen, I have been with the Southern California Tribal Chairman's association for 21 years, and have been put on loan with the Golden State Network which is the, you know, the.. the planning and development part of the Governor's SB156, California effort to build middle mile infrastructure to support, you know, the disconnected folks in California, specifically, the piece I'm working on is the tribal piece. I will put my information in the chat. For those to outreach... any outreach needed, happy to be here today to support the, you know, the digital equity piece, which is an often overlooked piece of the puzzle for Broadband for Tribal communities. So, looking forward to hearing from our partners at NTIA. and I'll go ahead and pass it off to Sunne Wright McPeak.

Thank you, Matthew, very much. It is such a pleasure to be able to join Senior Advisor Matthew Rantanen and Secretary Christina Snider. In welcoming you all to this briefing, and be a partner with the California Department of Technology, the California Broadband Council, and all of the members of the California Broadband, California Emerging Technology Fund to be involved in helping inform all tribal leaders about the opportunity to [inaudible] technical assistance from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration of the US Department of Commerce. We are very excited that NTIA is here as a partner in this outreach. I want to underscore that the Regional Broadband consortia and Metropolitan Planning Organizations such as The San Diego Association of Government and Southern California Association of Governments are reaching out to all tribes within their region. So let me just stop for a moment because we have background noise, and I'll ask that people go on mute, who's not speaking right now. Thank you very much, that I think will help just communicate the last of my, my message to you. We know that if we are able to work with you in partnership as tribal leaders and to secure commitments to deploy high speed internet infrastructure to your tribal lands. If that is what you desire, then it is going to be far easier to connect all of California, it will be much more economical, it'll be much more strategic. And so, it's really with a great deal of pleasure that I get to turn this back to.... now, our partners at the California Department of Technology, Scott Adams and Cole Przybyla.

Thank you so much, Secretary Snider, Mr. Rantanen and Ms. McPeak. I'm always a pleasure to work with you folks. I want to thank in advance the National Telecommunications Information Administration, digital equity team for being here on a really critical topic and you know, most of all, I want to thank all of our, you know, California Tribal Entity partners that have joined today. We definitely look forward to continue to growing and expanding our partnership to achieve Broadband for All. And as stated before, infrastructure is a huge part of that, but the digital equity side as Mr. Rantanen said, is often overlooked, but critically important. Next slide please. Real quickly, just wanted to give a perspective on what the state is doing on digital equity. You know, the NTIA does have a digital equity planning grant for states to apply for, and the state is working and putting together our application to develop a statewide digital equity plan to identify barriers to digital equity and solutions to that. Some of the

measurables that... and objectives for promoting that plan are going to be access to fixed wireless broadband, online accessibility and inclusivity, public resources, digital literacy, awareness and uses of measures to secure online privacy and cybersecurity and access to devices and technical support. Ways to assess how digital inclusion impacts outcomes, particularly in economic and workforce development, Education, Health, civic and social engagement, and delivery and social services. And so that is going to be a plan that the state is putting together over the next year. Next slide please? Wanted to just kind of call out, and you'll hear more about this in the presentation from our NTIA partners, but you know, the state's commitment to partnership and collaboration is you know, really called out in in the digital equity planning grant requirements and that's meaningful engagement that prioritizes eight covered populations. So those are low-income individuals, aging individuals, incarcerated individuals, veterans, individuals with disabilities, members of racial and ethnic minority groups, excuse me individuals residing in rural areas and individuals with literacy barriers, including English learners and those who have low levels of literacy. We are committed to tribal engagement, and one you know, coordinating outreach and collaboration strategies with tribes, doing an inventory of existing resources, programs, strategies and plans among tribal governments, and aligning the state digital equity plan with tribal digital equity plans. Next slide. Real briefly, want to share the timeline that the NTIA will go over shortly but application deadline for the state to apply for the digital equity planning grant is July 12th. Sometime before October 2022, the NTIA will provide the funding to the state, and then the state will have one year to develop the digital equity plan and expects to finish in the fall of 2023. After that, what's really important you'll hear more about this, is that once the state's plan is approved by the NTIA, it will unlock our ability to receive capacity grants to implement the plan. And then there's a five-year implementation period. That will conclude my comments. And, I did just want to point out that, really the primary goal today is to continue to stress the state commitment and desire to partner with California Tribal governments, and you know ensuring broadband for all throughout the state and on tribal lands. And then, number two, to call out to specific funding allocations for tribal governments to develop their own digital equity plans that can be developed concurrently and aligned with the state's plan. And so, I am going to now pass it over to Adam Geisler from the NTIA. Adam?

Alright, can you hear me okay, Scott?

Yes, I can, loud and clear.

Al right beautiful. Well, [speaking in Native language] Good afternoon. My name is Adam Geisler, I'm an enrolled member and citizen in La Jolla Band of the Luiseño Indians, former tribal leader as well for my tribe. I'm now the Division Chief for the tribal connectivity and nation to nation coordination division here within the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth. That's OICG, at NTIA. I oversee about \$3 billion of funding to support the tribal broadband connectivity program and as you can see, in the title of the division, tribal connectivity and nation to nation coordination, is one of the aspects that my particular division supports. And so, many of you are familiar with the bipartisan infrastructure law, it's commonly called the infrastructure bill, where there's a lot of

broadband dollars that have come out. And today we're really focusing on another bucket of funds that we have here within the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth, specifically, the digital equity particular pot of funds. And so, each bucket of funding that we have here at NTIA has a specific director that oversees the implementation of that particular program. However, my team supports those activities in relationship to outreach, engagement, etc. And so, I'm really excited today to be joined by two of my colleagues. Number one, Angela Bennett, who is the Digital Equity director. So, as I mentioned, there's a director over the program. So, Angie is leading up the charge and is the primary director over all of the digital equity activities within NTIA, and will be going through an overview of the tribal specific components today. And then also, Natalie Romanoff is joining us as well. Natalie has a wealth of knowledge when it comes down to grant management and implementation and she's going to be covering some of the really important aspects that we want to make sure aren't left on the table. Um, before I go too much further and hand it over to Angie, I also did just want to acknowledge the partnership that NTIA has been able to engage in with the State of California and its various departments. Here at the federal government, we really do greatly appreciate the work that has gone on across the state, and the efforts that have been made around digital equity, around infrastructure, etc. and just really want to acknowledge the work that's been done by the governor and his team. I want to acknowledge Miss Secretary Snider, and that it's so exciting to hear, Miss Snider, that there is now a firm foothold for a secretarial position of Tribal Affairs within the governor's office. That is incredible. So, congratulations to you. I just want to say that publicly. Scott, your leadership has been amazing. And lastly, but definitely not least, all the tribal leaders that are spending time to be here on this call today. This broadband space is... I don't think is....as tricky as it may be, it's terminology a lot of times, but when we talk about education, access, critical infrastructure needs of our communities, it's the terminology that's new, but not the concepts. And so, for those of you that are on today that are coming on for the first time, I first just want to say you know, thank you for being here today, and being open and what I want to leave you with is, everybody you see on the line here today is going to want to help however we can over the next, you know, months and years ahead. So, anybody within the NTIA team, you know, Scott, I'm just going to put your team out there as well because I know you guys have been working, whether it's Scott, Matt, Cole, Alex, Fiona, et cetera. We are really working collaboratively and so, however we can be of assistance, I know we'll figure those aspects out... if there's specific needs of your tribe. Lastly, as we jump into this presentation, it's a presentation, I apologize if it feels like death by PowerPoint. Know that it is only going to be about 15 minutes long, and then we're going to get into the question and answers. I know that Alex and Fiona are going to be capturing that information in the chat. And so, as you have questions, please feel free to put those questions into the chat. And we will address all those questions at the end of the presentation. So, with that, I'm going to turn it over to Miss Angela Thi Bennett to talk specifically about the digital equity program, where Indian Country fits in that program, and the exciting opportunities that we have ahead of us. So, with that, over to you, Angie.

All right. Thanks a lot, Adam. As Adam said, my name is Angela Thi Bennett and I am the digital equity director for NTIA, you can all call me Angie. And thanks, you know, I just really want to shout out to California and Scott and Secretary Snider and all the tribal leaders this was a phenomenal engagement and just really appreciate the partnership with California to make sure that the funds that have been set aside for the tribes are accessed by them. Next slide, please.

Okay, so this is, as Adam said, the bipartisan infrastructure law where the funding has originated has now been branded "Internet for All" because under the present the administration, we want to make sure that everyone receives access to the internet. Next slide, please. There we go, thank you. So, under the bipartisan infrastructure law, the Digital Equity Act Program was created with a funding pool of \$2.75 billion. Under that act, it created three programs: \$60 million for planning, another \$1.44 billion for capacity, otherwise implementation, and then there's a third pot of money, which is \$1.275 billion for competitive that will follow the capacity grant. So, looking at the timeline, and Scott did such a great job, the NOFO or the Notice of Funding Opportunity was released May 13 for the planning grant portion of this of this grant, and that's to enable states and territories and tribes to develop a digital equity plan, which will then be submitted for the state, for the capacity grant funding. On here the deadline is July 12th, I can't emphasize that deadline enough, so you'll hear it multiple times, and then after the... after the July 12th deadline, we plan to have awards out in September, at which time the grant recipients will have one year to develop a digital equity plan, so that they can submit it for our capacity grant funding to be able to implement those plans. And soon after that... So let me just note, those two plans, the planning grant and the state capacity, are for states, territories, and tribes. And then the competitive grant which will follow, immediately follow the capacity grant funding, will be open to nonprofits, and you know, local political subdivisions and other entities for competitive process. Next slide please.

Okay, so under digital equity, tribes have a set-aside. So, there are two ways that tribes can engage and participate: one is through the set aside program. So again, this is *not a competitive grant*. These are dollars that have been set aside for tribes, all you have to say is "I want the money" by submitting a letter of intent. The second way that tribes can participate is to engage with states, as Scott laid out the State of California, has a very robust local engagement plan and there's an opportunity for the tribal entities to engage with states as they develop their state digital equity plans. Next slide. Okay, so here's kind of went over this, you know, the \$60 million.... this slide, you know, really lays out the three different grant programs... um, and let's go to the next slide. Okay, so here's the funding set aside. So, under the digital Equity Act, 5% of the funding ... not less than 5%, but 5% of the funding has been set aside for the tribal entities. So that's the equivalent of about \$15 million of that \$ 300 million made available so states we have allocated, \$50,000 to \$150,000 per tribe in this round for digital equity planning. So, depending on the number of tribes that submit a letter of intent will determine the amount of funding, you know that will be allocated for the planning. And then tribal organizations after you submit your letter of intent, will determine how many entities have submitted, which will then determine whether it's you know, \$50 to \$150 [thousand

dollars]. You'll find out what your allocation amount is, and then we'll give you instructions on how to submit your application based upon, based upon the allocation amount. If states, if states and other you know territories do not claim their state digital equity capacity grants, those, those funds can be set aside and added to the set aside for the tribal entity. I will also state that even with the planning grant fund if for some reason, a state does not submit for their digital equity planning grant dollars, we will do a one-time reallocation to the states and then whatever is left remaining will go towards the set asides for the tribal entities as well.

Next slide. Okay, so the funds as I discussed, can be used to you know, develop your tribal digital equity plan, help state the support plans and then the capacity grant funds to be to implement. So, we're not here to tell the tribal entities, "This is, excuse me, specifically, what you must do, take the planning opportunity to discover you know, from a people first perspective, what is it that you would like to see for your community? I'll give you a formal definition of digital equity and I will share with you I mean, that's not a term you know, in most of our communities that, you know, folks are used to, in fact, my own family has no idea you know, what a digital equity director does. So, here's the formal definition and I'm going to give you just the community-based definition. The term digital equity means the "condition in which individuals and communities have the information technology capacity that is needed for full participation in the society and economy of the United States." So, in layman's terms digital equity means: is to ensure that everyone, regardless of where they live, have access to affordable high speed reliable internet, the devices in which to use them and then the resources and the skills so that they can meaningfully use the internet to improve their lives: be it health, education, economic social cohesion, *however they deem is meaningful for them* so that they can thrive. So, it's really ensuring that the resources are getting to our communities, so that, they can you know, so that they can thrive. Next slide. So, in the NOFO, it does list you know, digital equity plan requirements. Some may or may not apply to tribes, but just know that, through every single step of the way, you have the NTIA team available to support you. So, when it comes to strategies to identify, you know, what are the barriers to digital equity faced by the different cover populations, or developing measurable objectives, or you know, you know, engaging with other stakeholders, all of these different requirements that we will have for the state digital equity plans, we will be a resource and we'll be providing technical assistance and working with the state of California to just help get the information and the tools and resources that you need so that you develop a digital equity plan that is suitable for your community. Next slide.

And here's some additional asset inventory, coordination, outreach strategy. Implementation, as you know, we discussed as digital equity plan, is your roadmap of how you will utilize the capacity grant funding, once you receive it. And then just know, as with any plan, any best developed plan, once you begin implementing, changes and shifts may have to happen, and we definitely understand that, and that's why we will be with you to address and answer any questions, and really just help you with the process. Next slide please. So, tribal entities are among the key stakeholder groups that states should coordinate with in developing the plans as you can see from, you know,

Scott's presentation, that tribal entities, you know, are included throughout every step of the development of the state digital equity plan, and just even as the implementation you know, occurs, you know, stakeholder engagement is not a one-time experience, but it's ongoing throughout the planning, as well as the implementation of the plan. Next slide, please. Okay, so, what do you need to do to access your digital equity planning grant funds? Unlike the states, all you have to do at this point is submit a letter of intent. On your letterhead, with the signature of the governing body, and identify who will be the administer entity (there are some tribal entities that, you know, plan to be part of a consortium and will have a third party serve as the administering entity for them. That is fine, that is acceptable.) And then just list a few of the activities that you plan to pursue in you know, the development of your digital equity plan, but know that you're not bound, you know, at this stage of what you put in. And honestly, throughout this process, we understand things change. And so we are, you know, flexible and we recognize that. And, we have a sample letter of intent. We have a sample list of different activities that you could, you know, include in that letter of intent as well. And you, and next slide. Okay, here it is, the submission. So, you have until July 12th, you can either submit the letter of intent via the grants portal, and there's a link to access the grants portal.

You can email it to "digitalequity@ntia.gov" or you can send it by mail or courier, just if you send it by mail or courier, it needs to be postmarked no later than 11:59 PM eastern on July 12. Don't worry about making mistakes, you know, don't worry if this is okay, if you have questions, reach out to us, let us know. But just submit your LOI, and if there's anything that we need to fix, we can always fix it after your submission. We just need you to get it in, so that you're, you know, you're eligible for the funds. And then you know, yes, absolutely. And then once you, all of the LOIs [are submitted] after July 12th we'll determine how many have applied, and then you'll be notified in a separate communication of: here's your allocation amount, and here's the application, here's the budget, you know, here are the samples, so that you can, you know you're not starting from scratch and if you, again, if you need help with that application and the budget and the budget narrative afterwards, we are definitely available to help you. Next slide, please. Okay, at this point, I am going to turn it over to my colleague, Natalie Romanoff, who is just amazing and you will find out she is ever so knowledgeable, with this. Natalie?

Thanks, Angie. Hi, everyone. I'm Natalie Romanoff, I am a Grants Management Specialist at NTIA and I am the one that's going to walk you through the portal. So, with other grant programs that you may be familiar with, some programs, you submit everything by mail, some if you've gotten a FEMA grant, you would go into their grant system, NTIA now has our own grant system. We're using the Salesforce platform, so it's pretty easy to use, but you have to register in order to use it.

So, if you can see on the screen, there's some instructions on how to register to get into the portal. One thing that's really great about this system is once you have one person in the portal, they can assign different people to also be in the portal with you. It's a very collaborative environment. So, if there's more than one person in your tribe that wants to work on an application, or, you know, look at what's in the portal, you can

have multiple people in there at the same time on one account. I'm not going to read through the slides because you can go to the portal, it's ntia.gov, or you can go to several different websites to get to this portal. We have a bunch of different ways to get there. I will stick them in the chat before this webinar is over so that you guys have the website links to get there. But once you get into our portal, you will need to register, it does have a dual authentication process, as many websites do now. But, once you're in, you'll be able to submit your LOI through the portal, or you can, as Angie said, you know, submit it through an email. Next slide.

So, as you see on the screen, it's pretty easy. You'll literally click a button to submit your LOI, your letter of intent. And then you'll just upload it, just as a regular attachment. There are a couple of buttons you'll need to validate that you're allowed to do that for your tribe. But it is a pretty simple, singular upload for your LOI submission. Next slide. Wow, we get really into detail here. So, it's just walking you through you need to click "save" and "next" in order to have your LOI submitted through the portal. The last screenshot you see, the one on the bottom, will have your approval. You know, showing that you did submit it, you will also get an email, once you've submitted your letter of intent saying that you did submit it so you can keep that for your records or if anything comes up and you want to show anyone else in your tribe that you did submit the letter on time. Next slide.

Okay, other information. sam.gov. We talk about sam.gov a lot here at NTIA because it is a system that we do not own but you must be registered in. You do not need to have your sam.gov registration complete and active in order to submit your letter of intent, but in order to receive federal funding, so in order to get an award, *you must have an active SAM registration*. What does that mean? It means you need to go to sam.gov, and search for your entity's name and see what it says. You can search by several different fields. You can search by your entity name, your UEI number, your unique entity identifier. Several months ago, and for the past many years we used to have DUNS numbers, D U N S numbers. In April of this year, the government went away from the DUNS number and is now using a UEI number. You can only get that number if you're in sam.gov. So, after this webinar, I'd recommend you go into sam.gov, and search for your entity and see if you have a registration and what the status of the registration is. There's many different statuses but the one that we're looking for is an active registration, so it will literally say active on it. If you are pending, or you're inactive, there will be instructions in sam.gov for how to reactivate your registration. There are lots of hiccups with Sam, and we do not have a capability to go into the backend to clean it up. So, the earlier you start this process, the better. It can take several weeks to update a SAM registration depending on what the issue is. If you have questions about it, I'll also put my information in the chat. You can give me a call and I can see what I can see in the SAM because I have a little bit more access than some others. But I still can't fix your problems. But I can at least show you what the problem is. So please go to Sam, check on it. You don't need it for the LOI but you will need it in order to receive federal funding.

And I think that that's it. Here are some helpful links. So, internetforall.gov has all the information about all the different broadband programs, not just from NTIA but for the

federal government as a whole. The Broadband USA website is my favorite website to get to all things, NTA grant programs. If you go to broadbandusa.gov You can find a link for all the different grant programs, so we have the digital equity program, the BEAD program and the middle mile program, that are all going to be bringing broadband to the country. The NTIA grants portal, that is where you will go to submit your LOI if you decide to go through the portal. And then if you have any questions you can email us a digitalequity@ntia.gov.

So next steps is, you know, get organized, talk to your, your different teams, you can talk to the California team. And then you could submit any questions to us by either emailing internetforall@ntia.gov or digitalequity@ntia.gov. We answer both email boxes, and we will have more webinars. We probably won't have another one on digital equity, because the application is due July 12th, which is next week. I'm gonna say it again, the application is due July 12th, which is next week. And please make sure you get your LOI in so that we can consider you for the funding. And I think that that's it for us.

All right. So, Natalie, thank you, Angie, thank you. Just to double down, everybody. Jul 12th for all the tribes that are on the line today, is the date for the state to submit their plan, however, it is also the date for tribes to have their LOI submitted as Miss Romanoff just covered. So, if you didn't hear it, we're going to repeat it four more times before we get off the call today: the LOI is due July 12th. There's a "Dear Tribal Leader Letter" that has gone out to all of you, your tribal leaders within the state of California, as well as a sample LOI with suggested activities, although I think that there's also some opportunities for collaboration within the state. So, that's the other thing I do want to say, when we're talking about awards that could range between \$50 to \$150,000. Right? 109 federally recognized tribes, everybody looks at pooling their funds, regionally or collectively or amongst consortiums, and however you want to do that, there's a lot of opportunity there to really address the digital equity and education components that are really needed in a lot of the communities within this wonderful state of California and respective community. So, with that, Scott will go ahead and turn it back over to you, and again, thank you for the opportunity to be here and we'll answer any questions that there may be.

Yeah, thank you so much, Adam and NTIA team. Do want to hand it over to Alex Banh, and open up this session to any questions that folks might have. Please just know that we're all here to provide any technical assistance that we can, whether it's our Office of the Broadband and Digital Literacy or NTIA or CETF. So, Alex?

All right, thanks, guys. So yeah, let's just start with one question that came, came through the chat, the chat and then we can go ahead and unmute for more discussion conversation. So yeah, just one question for NTIA folks, this question came in from Sorna: If we are already registered in the NTIA portal because we have an existing NTIA grant, do we need to register again?

This is Natalie, I can answer that, you do not need to register again. If you go to the NTIA grants portal, and you click on the home button, you'll see all the eligible programs,

and then you can click on the digital equity program, and it will take you to submit your LOI through that.

Right, thanks, Natalie. We have a new question that came in from Gail: how does the tribe determine what entity it will have administer their digital plan? The local internet provider, or IT agency, for example?

The tribe can determine who... I mean the tribe themselves can administer their own plans. It doesn't have to be an IT agency, or internet provider. I know there are different consortiums and nonprofits and you know, agencies that normally you know, work with the tribal communities, particularly, you know, to help with capacity, you know, in managing the grant funds, but you get to determine who you would like to administer those funds for you. Adam, you want to add something?

Yeah, I think one thing, there's some flexibility with the tribal set-aside component of this, right. Obviously, the state, and Scott, and his team are working on making sure tribes are included in the state's digital equity plan, but for the tribes that are going to submit where you're going to do your own plan, in addition to being a part of whatever the state is going to do, I just want to point out that right now, the name of the game is just to get your placeholder in there in that LOI, and you can kind of sort the rest of those pieces out. So, say today you, you thought you were going to submit an LOI, and go you know what, I'm going to be administering this, I'm going to do that, and then you walk away from here and you talk to your tribal Chairman's association, or some other consortium and you see that you know, that they may have a better strategy, or approach, or just something that you hadn't thought of and you want to augment who you identified in your initial LOI, we are absolutely game for that. So, don't feel like, if there's one thing we're leaving with you and today, just submit your LOI, put your foot in the door, so we hold space for you. And then if there's some adjustments that need to be made, when you actually submit the formal application, then we can take that on a little bit later.

All right, thanks, Adam. And Angie, this question came in from Johnny. And Johnny, feel free to unmute if you want to elaborate more on this, so his question is, is there an update on the grants that were submitted last year?

That would be an Adam Question.

Do you mind repeating that the question again?

Is there an update on the grants that were submitted last year?

Yeah, we're continuing to make awards in a rolling fashion. Obviously, we would have liked to have seen everything come out and be announced by now, what I can tell you guys is they're in, they're in the pipe. It's a matter of process at this point getting through, our grants office. And that also means that notification for those of you that applied to the [inaudible] CPE program round one, if there's anybody that has not been successful, those notifications will also go out in and around the same time. So, you know, hold tight, there's a lot of information coming here in the next sixty days. You know, I also just want to express gratitude for everybody with their patience, through

this process. It hasn't been a.... you know, I'll admit it. It has not been an easy process. It really has been an exercise in patience for everybody, but I do want to thank everybody for their patience with this. And we're close.

Alright, Thanks, Adam. So those are all the questions from the chat. I would invite folks to feel free to unmute if you have any questions or comments. Seeing Ray's question in chat.... yes, Ray. The slides will be shared. We're going to post the link to the Portal to send out and post it in an email. So, while we're waiting for questions, we actually had a question that we wanted to pose to participants, um, and basically the question is, how can we help with the applications or you know, with submitting the letters of intent? How can we as the state or our colleagues at the NTIA help? Anyone can feel free to answer that one.

Sunne, I see you unmuted, go ahead and make a comment if you're interested.

Well, I wanted to just underscore what Alex's asked to all of the tribal leaders, and then ask if I could have to NTIA confirm, and I just want to thank again, having Adam and Angela and Natalie here, it's just been huge. And Mr. Geiser has been so involved with everything in California, so Adam, thank you so much. I want to make sure I'm understanding that for all the tribal leaders, you, we really want you to get your letters submitted from your own tribe. I think any association can also submit a letter of intent for additional technical assistance and then the question I had for NTIA is, is there a role that any of the Regional Broadband consortia or metropolitan planning organizations should play or can play with the tribal leaders to submit yet a group letter of intent for planning assistance?

Adam or Angela?

Okay, um, so I don't want to step on any of the any of the tribal leaders maybe posing questions, but, Sunne, I think that first off, I just want to acknowledge Sunne McPeak as the former Secretary of Transportation of California. The Dig Once policy concept is like, it's making its movement across the rest of the country. So, you know, I better pay homage there for a moment. But yes, I mean, working with your Regional Transportation Planning Organizations, your MPOs, your RTPAs, folks that are already meeting and convening in a regional format, 100% I would encourage you to look at working with them. And again, we're talking about digital equity. But I think that there's a lot of overlap between the deployment of infrastructure and how you bring your community along in workforce development, training, education, and other opportunities where your digital equity plan and your infrastructure plan should be complementary to one another. And so, yeah, regionally. I encourage all of you guys to do that, most of the tribes are meeting in a regional fashion. We're actually down here, I guess, technically not a SANDAG office today, Sunne, but I know they have a seat at the table with SANDAG, the San Diego port for example. So yeah, double down on that. Regionalization with these funds is really the suggested methodology, but we respect tribal sovereignty and if you do want to go at it on your own, more power to you, we will help either way. We just want to be a resource to you. Angie, I'm not sure if you have anything you want to add there.

Yeah, I do. So even if the tribes do want to have a consortium and you know have, you know, kind of the regional consortium, we will still need each tribal entity to submit its own letter of intent, and then designate that regional consortium, as you know, as the administering entity. I will tell you that we've requested guidance, and we're waiting on an opinion, because once the applications, you know, are distributed for the tribes to send back, the question has been posed by you know, to us, you know, will they have to submit a separate application within the consortium? Or will they be able to submit one consortium application to cover everyone? So, we have a request for guidance, for legal guidance, out on that when it comes to the actual application. But in the meantime, let's get the letters of intent in, and you know, do that designation while we work out that other issue because I do, I mean, we all get it, like wow, we have a large consortium that's a lot of individual applications. But know that we you know, we're aware of it. We're working through that, and just be patient with us. But we'll have an answer shortly. But in the interim, let's get the LOIs in.

Thank you so much, Angie, and again, thank you, Adam, for all your leadership for California let alone the nation.

Yeah, yeah. And I see another, thank you, I see another question. Yes, you can submit your LOI now, and decide that you will administer it yourself. And then, you know, when it's time to do the application, you can say: you know what, I want to join a consortium. And you can then change the administering entity at that point.

Right. Thanks, Angela. So, while we have you, you're on a roll, another question from Johnny. So, the question is, we had mentioned that there's a sample letter, which we have, but there's also is there a list of activities sample activities that can also be shared?

Yeah, so with that sample letter, there's an exhibit to that sample to the sample letter that has, like, examples of different activities.

Great, thank you. And yeah, as a reminder, so that letter was shared with the invite, but it will also be shared in the post event link. Another question from Gale: how long after the LOI can we expect to see the instructions on a blank?

So, it will be after the July 12th deadline. Our goal... I mean, we're supposed to make announcements you know, in September, our goal is to respond to you with the allocation sometime in August. And then you'll be provided.... I want to say 60 days to you know, prepare your application to submit.

A couple more, one from Daryl earlier, is there a particular person who should make the initial registration account, the Tribal Chair, or the Grant's Administrator, for instance?

Natalie?

So, there's no one that has to make the initial account. Anyone from your organization can create the first account, and then they can actually invite others to collaborate or be the authorized representative for the account. So, all it takes is one person to get in there to start it and then they can invite others, or you can join under the same

organization. So, there's no requirement that you know, a tribal leader has to be the first person, it can be anyone that is reasonably responsible to work on grant awards for your tribe.

Thanks, Natalie. Question from Samantha: are there reporting requirements for the grant funds, and where would those be found?

Angie, I don't know if you want me to go?

Go ahead.

Sure, so, there are reporting requirements for the grant funds. So, if you go to broadbandusa.gov and go to the digital equity grant program information, you can look at our "NOFO" the Notice of Funding Opportunity, in there, there are several different grant reporting requirements. You'll have at least semi-annual, so twice a year, you'll have financial reporting. It's a pretty standard financial report. And then we will also have a programmatic report that's asking about your programmatic progress. And then, there are a couple of other requirements, you will have Infrastructure Act reporting requirements, because this is part of the Infrastructure Act, and there might be some other reports that you may have to do for this program, but they are listed in the NOFO, and when we are doing the application process, we will go into them at length.

Okay, thanks, Natalie.

Cole.... can I ask, Cole, can you pull up the LOI? Okay, thank you. Okay. Alright, so, if you see on this LOI, the sample that we have for you like we shared, it is very simple. And I was talking, I think Anna's on the call, wait, this sounds too good to be true that, you know, the federal government has made this an easy process? I know, right? So, this is literally the letter and you can take this very same template, put your you know your name on as you can see the highlight "on behalf of ABC tribe." This is our intent to participate, and then you designate in the next paragraph who is going to serve as the administering entity, you can say that you will serve, you know, your tribe will serve as the administering entity or the consortium or whomever you're working with, put in your contact information. And then, in support of this plan development, which is the last paragraph, you can put a brief description of activities right there. And... if you can go, I think it's to the second page. There we go. There are, a list of different activities that you can pull from to put in that little bit of paragraph. It's as... you don't have to put all of these things in here, I mean, essentially, it's... you can put to develop the plan, you know, the strategies and or, to, you know, engage with the state in their state digital equity planning process, and then you can again, email this to us send it in via mail or just upload it, you know, directly, you know, into the NTIA grants portal. Thank you. Thank you, Cole.

Thanks, Angie. So, it's just that simple.

It's not a trick!

Yeah, so any other, we have a couple of minutes left, any other questions? Feel free to unmute or put them in the chat, or any thoughts on how the state or NTIA can support you in submitting this letter of intent?

Hey Cole, I don't have a question, I just want to do a plug. If you are worried about submitting the LOI because the application... if you look at the NOFO it looks a little daunting, we have sample applications and we will have a lot of technical assistance available for you during the application period so that we can help you get your application in after your LOI is submitted. So, you won't be alone to develop this application. You'll have a lot of people there to help you. So, I hope that that encourages you to submit your LOI because we will make sure that you can get your application in for the funding after the LOI process.

Thank you, Natalie, and I'm going to state one more time that we are about to send an email out, a follow up with the event if you do not receive this email within 30 minutes. Let's reach out, my email is in the chat, it's coming from the broadband for all email. And just to reiterate, it's going to have the letter of intent draft, and the workshop slide deck, so be on the lookout for all that material to show up in less than 30 minutes after this event. And we are still around for any more additional questions, Alex. I know I think that's what you're about to say.

Yeah, I was just going to, yeah, thanks Cole, I was going to just pause, take a quick pause here for any last questions? Feel free to put them in the chat or unmute. And if not, I'll hand it back to Scott when he's ready.

Well, just want to say thank you to everyone who attended today. We are looking forward to continuing to work with you all and partner with you on making broadband for all the reality in California and on your tribal lands, and wanted to extend a thanks to Adam, Angie, Natalie and NTIA team, to Matt Rantanen and Sunne McPeak, to Cole, Alex and Fiona of our staff. As I said, our office stands ready to assist you in any way that we can. And without further ado, I also want to thank Secretary Snider for her leadership and advancing broadband in California, and hand it over to her for some closing comments.

Thank you, Scott, and thank you everyone for taking some time during your lunch hour to learn a bit more about this opportunity. I think our goal as the state, as we mentioned earlier, is just make sure that tribes are able to leverage all of the opportunities available in expression of their own self-governance and priorities, but also that we as a state are accounting for those opportunities as well [inaudible] too and where we can help with capacity. So, please feel free to reach out to all of the resources that we've made available on this webinar. And, we look forward to hopefully building out a more equitable future and broadband in California for all of us. So, thanks, everyone. I really appreciate your joining today and take care.