OICG

Office of Internet
Connectivity and Growth

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

U.S. Department of Commerce

National Telecommunications and Information Administration

Reliable, high-speed Internet service is vital to work, learn, and thrive in the 21st century. Broadband access is not a luxury; it is a necessity.

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Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth

I. REPORT INTRODUCTION

Approximately 24 million U.S. households, or one in five, lack high-speed Internet service, preventing them from fully participating in modern life. Reliable, high-speed Internet service is vital to work, learn, and thrive in the 21st century. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted what many already knew: broadband access is not a luxury; it is a necessity. As hybrid work, education, and other online services have become the norm, the need to provide high-speed Internet for all is imperative. Connecting the country will ensure that everyone can participate in the modern economy, facilitate inclusive growth, and enhance U.S. competitiveness on the global stage.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) is leading the effort to connect everyone in America to affordable, high-speed Internet service by working with stakeholders including states, Tribes, localities, the private sector, nonprofits, community organizations, and educational institutions. As a part of the mission to achieve the dual goal of digital equity and universal access to Internet for All, and as directed by the ACCESS BROADBAND Act, NTIA established the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth (OICG) in July 2021.[1] OICG administers and manages multiple federal broadband grant programs, conducts various stakeholder engagement activities, and leads interagency coordination efforts to close the digital divide.

The ACCESS BROADBAND Act requires:

OICG to submit to relevant congressional committees and publish on its website an annual report that contains a description of OICG's work for the previous year and the number of U.S. residents who received broadband as a result of Federal broadband support programs and the Universal Service Fund Programs.[2] The OICG Annual Report describes the work of OICG, fulfilling the statutory requirement of the ACCESS BROADBAND Act.

The ACCESS BROADBAND Act also mandates that OICG report on

"how many residents of the United States were provided broadband by which universal service mechanism or which Federal broadband support program," and include an "estimate of the economic impact of such broadband deployment efforts on local economies, including any effect on small businesses or jobs."[3]

NTIA's *Federal Broadband Funding Report: Investing in Internet for All* fulfills these ACCESS BROADBAND Act requirements. The Federal Broadband Funding Report compiles and highlights data on federal broadband investments across the Federal government and the Federal Communications Commission. The report includes an interactive dashboard, available on NTIA's website, that allows users to dive deeper into federal broadband investments.

The 2022 OICG Annual Report is the second annual report prepared under the ACCESS BROADBAND Act. This report provides an overview of the work accomplished by OICG across its core responsibilities over the prior year as it administers the federal broadband grant programs of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law), the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, and NTIA's broadband technical assistance programs that facilitate access to affordable, high-speed Internet service.

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1. Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, Division FF, Title IX, Sec. 903(b), Pub. L. 116-260, 134 Stat. 1182, 3210, (Dec. 27, 2020).
2. *Id.* at Sec. 903(c)(2)(C)(i).
3. *Id.* at Sec. 903(c)(2)(C)(ii) and (iii).

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

> OICG's accomplishments in 2022 position NTIA to effectively support states, territories, Tribal nations, and stakeholders from the public sector, industry, labor, academia, and community organizations to close the digital divide and provide high-speed Internet service to the 24 million households without internet access in the years ahead.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) invests $65 billion to bring affordable, reliable, high-speed Internet service to everyone in America. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth (OICG) oversees the administration of $48.2 billion of this historic investment, as well as the broadband programs from the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (CAA). In 2022, OICG significantly scaled up its personnel and capabilities, positioning itself to meet the responsibilities established by these statutes.

OICG's key accomplishments across its four interconnected core pillars include:

Fund Broadband and Digital Inclusion Efforts

OICG manages NTIA's implementation of eight broadband grant programs authorized by the BIL and CAA.[4] In 2022, OICG awarded over $2.3 billion in grants across five of the eight broadband programs. Its largest program is the $42.45 billion Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. In administering BEAD, OICG received applications for planning funds from all 56 states and territories. NTIA disbursed $254.5 million in BEAD Program planning funds to improve state broadband office capacity and to develop five-year action plans to close the digital divide. OICG received 52 applications from the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto

Rico for the Digital Equity Planning Grant program. In addition, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and 467 Tribal entities submitted Letters of Intent (LOI) to apply for State Digital Equity Planning Grant funding. In 2022, $53 million of these funds have been disbursed, allowing states, territories, and Tribal entities to develop digital equity plans. The Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program received over 235 applications, requesting more than $5.5 billion in funding. The Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program distributed $1.73 billion in grant funds, funding 132 projects on Tribal lands throughout the United States. The Broadband Infrastructure Program funded 14 grants totaling more than $277 million and will connect 140,000 unserved households. In 2022, the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program disbursed nearly $52 million to fund 19 projects to support the new funding for broadband and digital inclusion efforts. OICG hired and onboarded 117 new employees and hosted over 100 events including 22 public webinars, 12 office hour sessions, seven Tribal consultations, and six local coordination meetings.

Leverage Data for Decision Making

As directed by the BIL, OICG devotes significant resources to ensure that federal dollars in broadband infrastructure

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4. The grant programs are: the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program; the State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program; State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program; Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program; the Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program; the Broadband Infrastructure Program; the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program, and the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program.

are invested in unserved and underserved areas. To better coordinate interagency activities and reduce duplication of funding, OICG works directly with Federal and state partners to obtain and share grant awards and pending application areas (as appropriate) in a common mapping tool called the National Broadband Availability Map (NBAM). This mapping database tool allows Federal agencies to identify potential areas of duplication and make informed funding decisions. In an additional measure to prevent duplication of funding and support interagency collaboration, NTIA, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Department of the Treasury (Treasury), and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to govern the exchange of broadband data. Additionally, NTIA facilitated meetings with Federal agencies and provided input on necessary functionality and data elements to the FCC's Broadband Funding Map. To ensure a holistic overview of broadband investments, OICG will continue to collaborate with the FCC on integrating the information from the FCC's map with other data sources (such as state broadband deployment). NTIA also collaborated with the Census Bureau to create two new data tools: (1) the ACCESS BROADBAND Dashboard that includes measures of broadband availability and adoption with economic indicators, and (2) an update to the Digital Equity Act Population Viewer that will provide covered population estimates defined by the Digital Equity Act of 2021 at the Census tract level.[5] Over time, these data resources will improve NTIA's ability to identify unserved and underserved locations and populations to better target broadband funding amounts and resources. OICG also guided the selection of economic indicators that may be used to assess the economic impacts of broadband expansion. These indicators are detailed in this year's Federal Broadband Funding Report and will guide economic impact analysis in the coming years.

Facilitate Interagency, State, Tribal, and Private Sector Coordination

In 2022, OICG hosted 25 Federal Funding Workstream meetings, bringing together 26 Federal agencies with broadband initiatives to share and learn about the work being done to expand high-speed Internet access. To help inform the priorities and design of the BIL broadband grant programs and development of the Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs), OICG held five listening sessions and assessed 557 responses to NTIA's pre-NOFO request for comments from state and local governments, Tribal nations, community organizations, industry, and other stakeholders. OICG continues engagement with industry, unions, community organizations, and training providers to create a diverse broadband workforce and prepare the domestic supply chain to support infrastructure deployment projects.

Build Capacity of Communities

OICG builds the capacity of communities through various outreach and communications techniques, including holding regional workshops, publishing tools and guides on effective strategies to expand broadband and digital equity, and convening stakeholders. OICG facilitates several cohort groups including the State Broadband Leaders Network, Digital Equity Leaders Network, the Tribal-State cohort, and the Tribal Broadband Leaders Network, which kicked off in October 2022. OICG also develops technical assistance and informational resources, and leads outreach efforts to assist states, territories, and Tribal nations in how to develop plans to provide affordable, high-speed Internet service for all. Capacity-building resources are available on NTIA's BroadbandUSA website, including information on all available federal broadband funding in the Federal Funding Guide. In 2022, OICG hosted more than 100 events including 22 webinars, 12 office hour sessions, and six local coordination events and published a variety of tools and guides to support capacity building efforts.

OICG's accomplishments in 2022 position NTIA to effectively support states, territories, Tribal nations, and stakeholders from the public sector, industry, labor, academia, and community organizations to close the digital divide and provide high-speed Internet service to the 24 million households without internet access in the years ahead.

Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth

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5.   Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Division F, Title III, Sec. 60301, Pub. L. 117-58, 134 Stat. 1209(Nov. 15, 2021).

III. OICG OVERVIEW AND MONUMENTAL GROWTH

The Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth (OICG) is housed within the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). It was created in 2021, pursuant to a mandate in the ACCESS BROADBAND Act, to oversee all broadband activity at NTIA and lead federal efforts to fund and expand broadband access across the country. OICG is led by Associate Administrator Douglas Kinkoph and employs approximately 130 people across 38 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

OICG's Vision

OICG envisions an equitable and inclusive future where everyone in America is connected to reliable, affordable, high-speed Internet service; enabling each person to fully participate in the modern, digital society by accessing opportunities and information only available online.

Department of Commerce (DOC)

Gina M. Raimondo
Secretary of Commerce

National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)

Alan Davidson
Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information and NTIA Administrator

Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth (OICG)

Doug Kinkoph
Associate Administrator of the NTIA Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth

Office of Minority Broadband Initiatives (OMBI)

Kevin Hughes
Acting Director of the NTIA Office of Minority Broadband Initiatives

To achieve this vision, OICG facilitates equitable deployment, access, and adoption of broadband through a whole-of-government approach with other institutions that invest in broadband and digital inclusion, including federal agencies, states, Tribal nations, and the private sector. OICG's efforts center on four interconnected areas that are mutually reinforcing, consisting of:

1. Fund Broadband Infrastructure and Digital Inclusion Efforts
2. Leverage Data for Decision Making
3. Facilitate Interagency, State, Tribal, and Private-Sector Coordination
4. Build Capacity of Communities

Over the past year, OICG's work in facilitating coordination between partner agencies and program stakeholders enabled states, territories, and Tribes to build holistic and equitable plans that take into account the perspective of diverse communities. Additionally, investments in data will aid in developing high-speed Internet capacity in communities. In future years, emphasis on OICG's core areas and activities may shift as the needs of stakeholders and the work of OICG evolve.

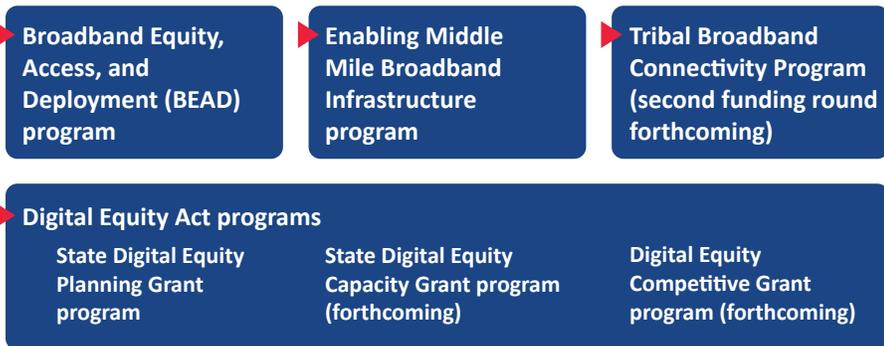Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth

Grant Program Administration

OICG manages NTIA's implementation of a number of broadband grant programs. In November 2021, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), was passed by Congress and signed into law.[6] BIL includes more than $65 billion to invest in closing the digital divide in our country, of which NTIA is accountable for administering $48.2 billion for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD), Digital Equity Act, Enabling Middle Mile Infrastructure, and the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program initiatives.[7] OICG continues to implement and award funding for the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 broadband programs. These monumental investments provided significant opportunity for OICG to expand high-speed Internet access for all.
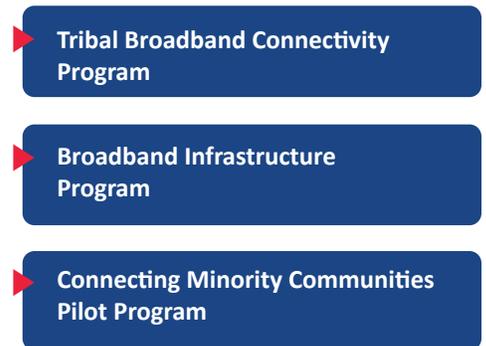
After BIL was enacted and in advance of publishing the programs' NOFOs, OICG began to produce and publish program-specific information, engage with stakeholders, and align its resources to guide implementation of these programs. After the NOFO's release, OICG continued to provide accessible programmatic information by publishing one-page factsheets for each program explaining key program details, the proposal response and review timeline, and the planned timing of awards. OICG published, and continues to update, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and hosts Office Hours.

With the continuation of the CAA broadband initiatives and the enactment of the BIL programs, OICG is responsible for implementing and administering all of NTIA's federal broadband grant programs, including:
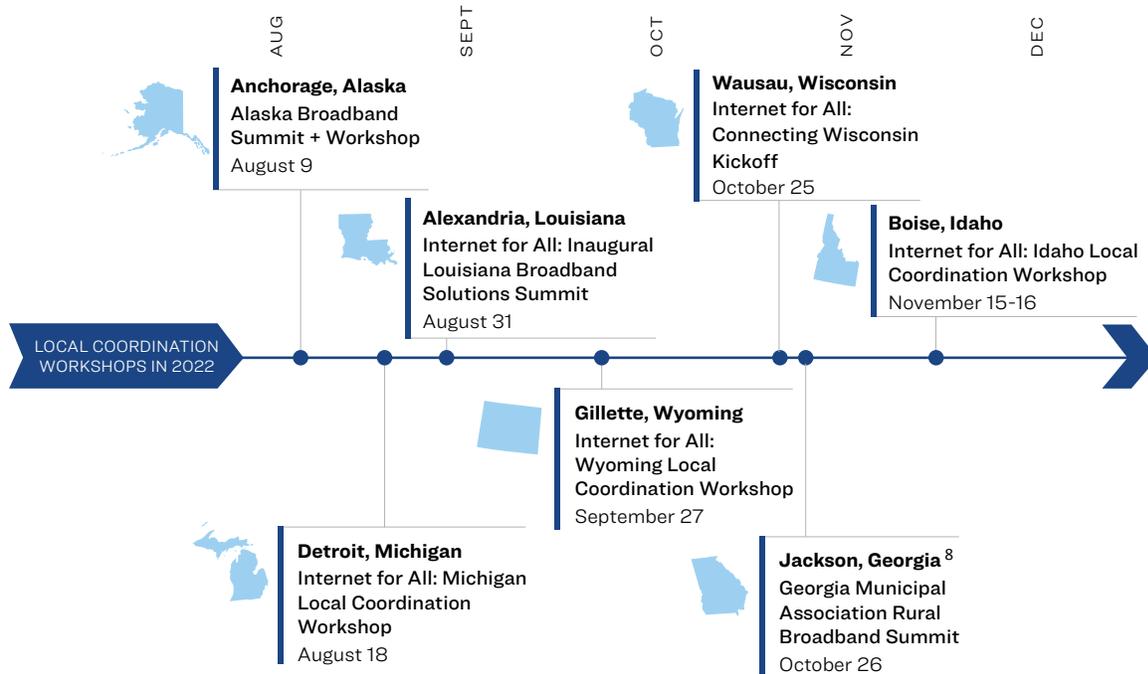
Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Broadband Programs

- ▶ Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program
- ▶ Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure program
- ▶ Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (second funding round forthcoming)
- ▶ Digital Equity Act programs
  - State Digital Equity Planning Grant program
  - State Digital Equity Capacity Grant program (forthcoming)
  - Digital Equity Competitive Grant program (forthcoming)

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 Programs

- ▶ Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program
- ▶ Broadband Infrastructure Program
- ▶ Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program

As OICG implements the Internet for All programs, it conducts weekly comprehensive meetings for the BIL programs, weekly and monthly OICG leadership meetings, and quarterly leadership meetings to track the progress of BIL and CAA programmatic goals.

To better advance cohesive messaging on its programs and mission, NTIA established a larger External Affairs infrastructure that spans a variety of new and existing teams to help keep core stakeholders informed of, and engaged in, the Internet for All initiative. The Internet for All initiative is a whole-of-government approach to ensuring that all Americans have access to affordable, reliable high-speed Internet. Included in this infrastructure is the OICG Communications & Engagement team, which led the organization and implementation of a series of local coordination workshops across the country. These workshops brought together critical stakeholders to discuss coordination on high-speed Internet efforts and provided technical assistance as states prepare to receive significant funds from BIL. The local coordination workshops held in 2022 were:

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6.   Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, Pub. L. 117-58, 135 Stat. 429 (Nov. 15, 2021) (IIJA).

7.   See id. at Division F.

AUG   SEPT   OCT   NOV   DEC

Anchorage, Alaska
Alaska Broadband Summit + Workshop
August 9

Wausau, Wisconsin
Internet for All: Connecting Wisconsin Kickoff
October 25

Alexandria, Louisiana
Internet for All: Inaugural Louisiana Broadband Solutions Summit
August 31

Boise, Idaho
Internet for All: Idaho Local Coordination Workshop
November 15-16

LOCAL COORDINATION WORKSHOPS IN 2022

Gillette, Wyoming
Internet for All: Wyoming Local Coordination Workshop
September 27

Detroit, Michigan
Internet for All: Michigan Local Coordination Workshop
August 18

Jackson, Georgia [8]
Georgia Municipal Association Rural Broadband Summit
October 26

Growth of OICG to Meet the Moment

In 2022, OICG built on its experience administering the programs established by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 to accelerate the growth of its office and meet the moment of the massive new investment in high-speed Internet access. Less than six months after President Biden signed BIL into law, OICG released the Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFOs) for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD), State Digital Equity Planning Grant, and Enabling Middle Mile Infrastructure Programs.

To accomplish this large-scale feat of writing and releasing three NOFOs within six months, OICG consistently engaged with stakeholders across the federal government, states, territories, and Tribal nations. From January 2022 – April 2022, OICG published a variety of resources created to provide concise information on program-related aspects of broadband infrastructure and policy. These resources helped states and localities navigate potential challenges in planning for and effectively deploying programmatic funds. Simultaneously, OICG hosted five Pre-NOFO Technical Assistance Webinars covering a variety of topics, including: "Broadband Technology and Economics Primer," "Engagement and Partnerships," "Enabling Conditions," "Digital Equity & Inclusion," and "Supply Chains and Workforce Development." Pre-NOFO webinars were attended by 2,946 participants and viewed 1,353 times after being posted online. From December 2021 – February 2022, NTIA asked for and received comments from stakeholders and the public about the new broadband programs through five public virtual listening sessions attended by 2,913 participants during the live event. This feedback assisted OICG in designing the NOFO parameters in consideration of stakeholder input and interest.
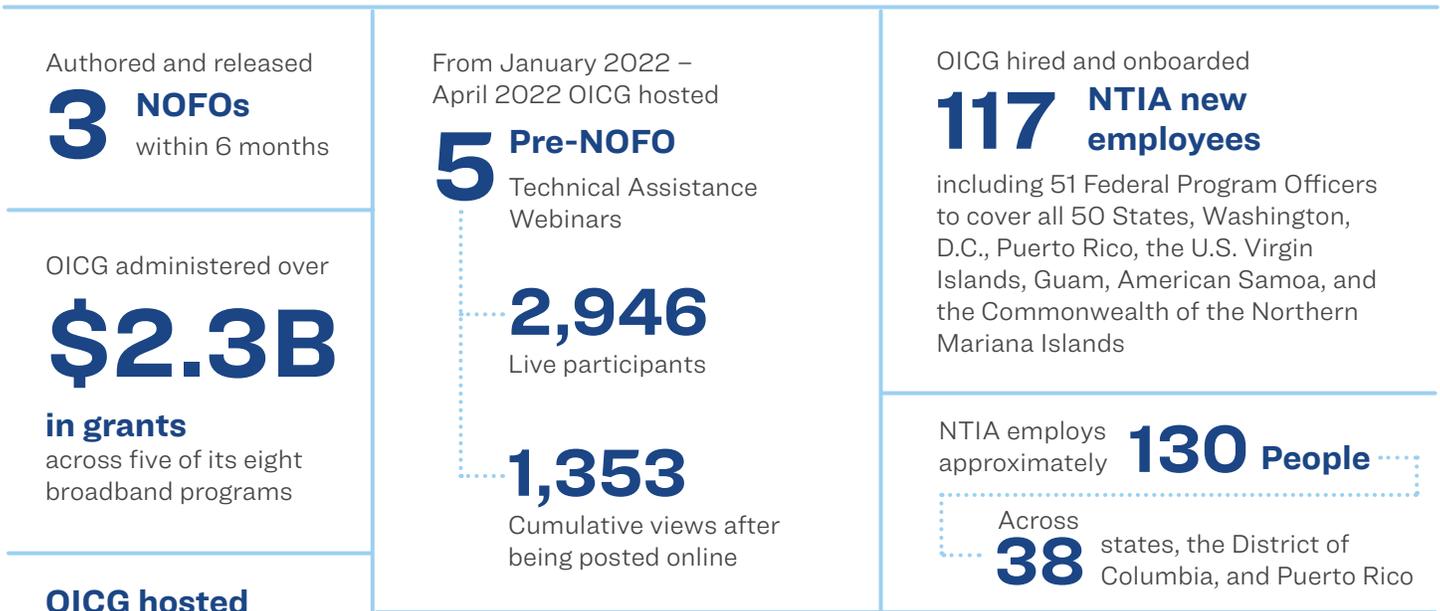
To scale its operations, NTIA instituted hiring and onboarding process improvements, leading to the onboarding of 117 new OICG employees over 12 months, including 13 employees in leadership roles. With the establishment of the BEAD and the Digital Equity (DE) Act programs, OICG initiated the hiring of Federal Programs Officers (FPOs) to cover all 50 states, Washington D.C., Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the

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8.   This event was not hosted by NTIA, but NTIA provided significant input into the development of the agenda.

Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth

Northern Mariana Islands. FPOs serve as liaisons between OICG and the broadband offices for the state(s) and/or territories they are assigned. They serve as subject-matter experts and as liaisons between local stakeholders and NTIA, and work to encourage community engagement. In addition, they monitor the work performed on the grant awards in their jurisdiction, create relationships, and act as a conduit to the federal government for the BIL grant programs.

NTIA organized and hosted an initial FPO Broadband Academy, a three-day internal training opportunity for newly hired NTIA FPOs and other NTIA staff. The Academy, held in Washington D.C., from August 30 – September 1, 2022, provided consistent and universal training in broadband infrastructure, deployment, and adoption, as well as the NTIA Internet for All broadband grant programs. During the FPO Academy, attendees learned best practices for engaging stakeholders and how to provide appropriate, consistent messaging. Over 150 people attended the Academy, and speakers included Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, Deputy Secretary Don Graves, Assistant Secretary Alan Davidson, and Associate Administrator Douglas Kinkoph. This training event provided an opportunity for FPOs and NTIA staff to interact with each other and with OICG's leadership, creating a cohesive understanding of the agency and its approach to its broadband programs. It also gave the FPOs the tools and resources they needed to start building relationships with state and local stakeholders, speak at events, and advance the agency's effort for an on-the-ground approach to the Internet for All programs.

2022 Highlights

Authored and released

3 **NOFOs**
within 6 months

OICG administered over

$2.3B

in grants
across five of its eight broadband programs

OICG hosted

From January 2022 – April 2022 OICG hosted

5 **Pre-NOFO**
Technical Assistance Webinars

2,946
Live participants

1,353
Cumulative views after being posted online

OICG hired and onboarded

117 **NTIA new employees**
including 51 Federal Program Officers to cover all 50 States, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

NTIA employs approximately **130** **People**
Across **38** states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico

22 Public webinars   **12** Office hour sessions   **7** Tribal consultations   **100** Events

In addition to implementing and administering these grant programs, NTIA established the Office of Minority Broadband Initiatives (OMBI) within OICG, as directed by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, to promote equitable broadband access to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs), and their communities across the country. OMBI builds upon the foundational

Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth

work that began under NTIA's 2019 Minority Broadband Initiative, which involved establishing strategic partnerships and programs with HBCUs, TCUs, and MSIs to provide them the resources they need to leverage their role as hubs for innovation and economic opportunity in their surrounding communities to expand high-speed Internet access, and increase digital inclusion. OMBI continues to focus on expanding access and identifying barriers to high-speed Internet service for students, faculty, and staff at HBCUs, TCUs, and MSIs, as well as administering the Connecting Minority Communities (CMC) Pilot Program.

In 2022, OMBI participated in several events in support of its mission, including:

In September, OMBI staff attended the 2022 National HBCU Week Conference in Washington D.C. Acting as both thought leaders and attendees, OMBI staff members were able to network and build stronger ties with HBCU stakeholders looking to achieve digital equity and expand connectivity. In addition, one FPO used a longstanding relationship as a federal agency working group member with the White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity through Historically Black Colleges and Universities to support the planning of the 2022 National HBCU Week Conference. OMBI Acting Director Kevin Hughes and Special

Representative for Broadband Andy Berke presented on the Advancing Broadband Connectivity through HBCUs panel.

On November 3, OMBI Acting Director Kevin Hughes and Deputy Secretary of Commerce Don Graves traveled to Durham, North Carolina to celebrate the $2.9 million Connecting Minority Communities grant for the North Carolina Central University's (NCCU) Digital Equity program. They later participated in a roundtable discussion to learn more about NCCU's broadband efforts and toured community sites, including the local library and a Destination Literacy bookmobile.

More information on OMBI's accomplishments can be found in its 2022 Annual Report.

Explore a Sample of Unique Resources Created by OICG in 2022

Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP) Awards Map

A map that pinpoints where Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program awards are made across the United States and provides summaries on each award.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers Version 5.0: Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure

The FAQ document is intended to clarify and provide guidance on information set forth in the Middle Mile Grant Program Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) on May 13, 2022.

TBCP Infrastructure Deployment Projects Baseline Report Instructional Video

This video walks TBCP grantees through how to fill out the Baseline Report required as a part of their TBCP Infrastructure Deployment award.

Office Creation Checklist and Toolkit

The two documents include a recommended checklist of steps to establish a state high-speed internet office, and examples and best practices for each step.

Workforce Planning Guide for BEAD Program Eligible Entities

NTIA offers this Workforce Planning Guide as a resource for Eligible Entities in developing their workforces for grant implementation as well as designing workforce plans and standards for subgrantees.
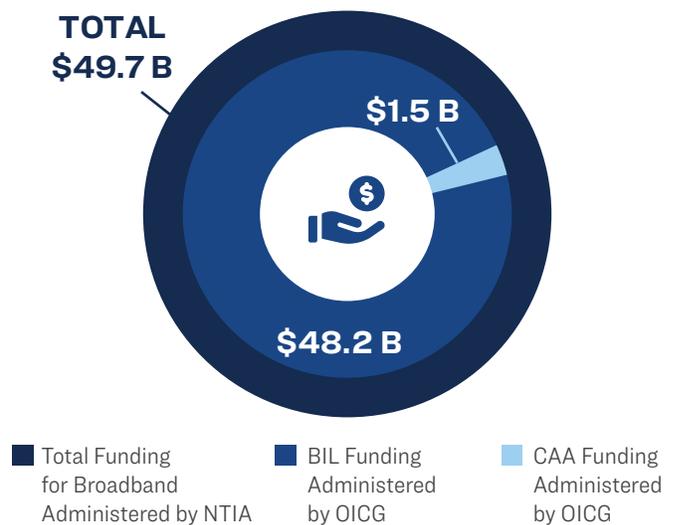
Internet For All Map

This map provides program progress by state for the BEAD and DE programs, and provides contact information for state and federal contacts in each state.

IV. FUND BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE AND DIGITAL INCLUSION EFFORTS

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (CAA) and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) authorized eight broadband grant programs, providing investments to bring high-speed and affordable Internet service to everyone in the country. BIL authorized $65 billion in new broadband initiatives, of which the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth (OICG) oversees five new broadband programs totaling $48.2 billion. These include the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program, the three Digital Equity Act programs, the Enabling Middle Mile Infrastructure program, and additional funding for the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. In addition, the CAA provided over $1.5 billion in funding for three broadband grant programs managed by OICG, including the initial Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP), the Broadband Infrastructure Program (BIP), and the Connecting Minority Communities (CMC) Pilot Program. OICG continues to award funding and oversee CAA program awards.

As administrator of these grant programs, OICG provides grant support, technical assistance, and funding to effectively deploy these historic investments, which will provide communities access to affordable high-speed Internet service and resources to accelerate the expansion of digital equity and inclusion. In 2022, NTIA awarded over $2.3 billion in funding.

TOTAL $49.7 B

$1.5 B

$48.2 B

- ■ Total Funding for Broadband Administered by NTIA
- ■ BIL Funding Administered by OICG
- ■ CAA Funding Administered by OICG

In 2022, OICG awarded over $2.3 billion. Specifically, OICG awarded:

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program
Planning Grants Totaling
$254.5M

Digital Equity Act State Digital Equity Plan Development Grants Totaling
$53M

The Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program
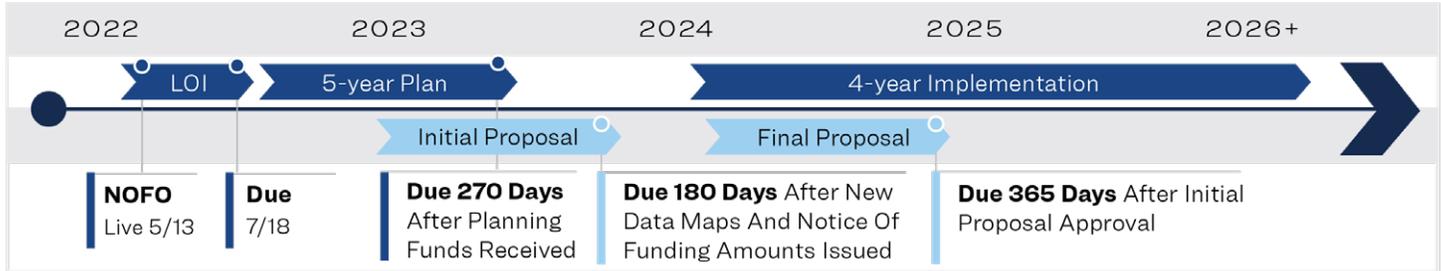**132 Awards**
Totaling Over
$1.73B

The Broadband Infrastructure Program
14 Awards
Totaling Over
$277M

The Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program
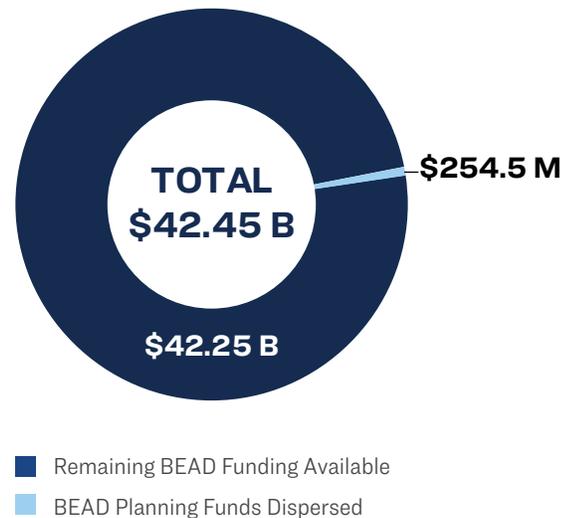**19 Awards**
Totaling Over
$51.99M

Enabling Middle Mile Infrastructure Program Grants will begin to be awarded in early 2023.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Broadband Programs

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program

The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program will facilitate achievement of the goal to provide Internet for All by prioritizing connecting unserved locations, specifically those that have no Internet access or access under 25/3 Mbps, and underserved locations that only have access under 100/20 Mbps. It provides $42.45 billion to expand high-speed Internet access by funding planning, infrastructure deployment, and adoption programs in all 50 states, Washington D.C., Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.[9] In 2022, all 56 of the eligible entities submitted Letters of Intent (LOI), and subsequent applications, for up to $5 million in initial planning funds, with OICG disbursing planning funds totaling $254.5 million.[10] OICG supported Eligible Entities in the LOI and application planning phase by facilitating 48 BEAD and Digital Equity Act (cross-programmatic) engagement events (such as local coordination convenings) and facilitated 34 BEAD specific technical assistance events. OICG also developed a variety of technical assistance resources to support eligible entities.

TOTAL $42.45 B

$254.5 M

$42.25 B

■ Remaining BEAD Funding Available
■ BEAD Planning Funds Dispersed

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9.   Total amount appropriated will differ from total grant funding due to administrative set asides.
10.   Territories are eligible for up to $1.25 million in initial planning funds.

The Digital Equity Act

The Digital Equity Act of 2021 established three grant programs totaling $2.75 billion.[11] These programs aim to provide the skills, technology, and capacity needed for all people and communities to reap the full benefits of the digital economy. In 2022, OICG provided 62 technical assistance events and resources held, 10 Digital Equity Leaders Network events and webinars, and released $53 million in Digital Equity Planning Funds. In 2022, OICG onboarded four federal employees to support the implementation of the Digital Equity programs and 51 federal program officers across states who are responsible for supporting the Digital Equity programs as well as BEAD.

The State Digital Equity Planning Grant is a $60 million formula grant program for states, territories, and Tribal governments to develop Digital Equity plans. The application window closed on July 12, 2022, with all 52 eligible Digital Equity applicants submitting applications for Digital Equity Planning Funds. Additionally, the four eligible territories and 467 Tribes, 81% of federally recognized Tribes from 29 states submitted LOI for Digital Equity planning funds.[12]
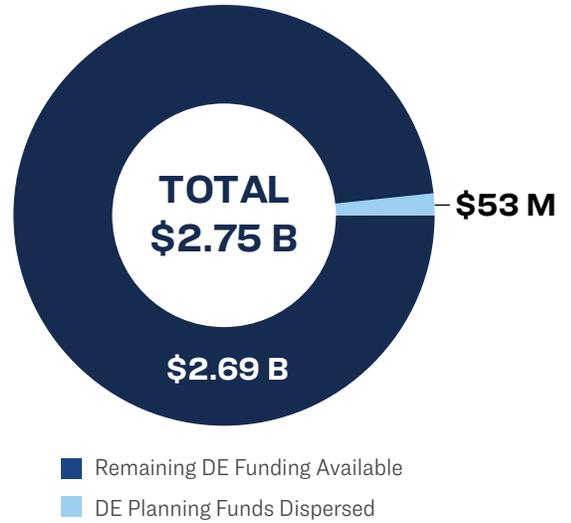
The State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program is a $1.44 billion formula grant program for states, territories, and Tribal governments. It will fund an annual grant program for five years in support of Digital Equity projects and the implementation of Digital Equity Plans. These funds will be allocated based on the formula provided in the Digital Equity Act and used to implement the plans developed through the State Digital Equity Planning Grant program.

The Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program is a $1.25 billion grant program that will fund annual grant programs for five years. This program will develop and implement digital inclusion activities and Digital Equity projects. The program is open to certain entities, such as political subdivisions of states, Tribal entities, nonprofits, community anchor institutions, local educational agencies, and workforce development organizations. OICG expects to release the NOFO for the Digital Equity Competitive Grants in 2024, after awarding the first State Digital Equity Capacity Grant.

To support the Digital Equity program's goals, the OICG Digital Equity team partnered with the National Digital Inclusion Alliance to promote Digital Inclusion Week 2022. Held from October 3 – October 7, 2022, this annual week of awareness, recognition, and celebration promotes digital equity in communities. NTIA staff spoke at several engagements that week, including events hosted by the National Cable & Telecommunications Association, Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot, the Intercultural Development Research Association, the New Jersey State Library, and the Connecticut Department

Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth

11.   Total amounts appropriated will differ from total grant funding per program due to administrative set asides.
12.   Number is based on 574 federally recognized Tribes.

of Administrative Services Bureau of Enterprise Systems and Technology. Digital Equity Director Angela Thi Bennett's video message discussed what NTIA is doing to support the theme "Turning Our Moment Into Movement," and specifically highlighted that all 56 states and territories have signed on to participate in Digital Equity programs. NTIA staff also actively collected videos of local advocates to share by social media, emphasizing the importance of the week. The week culminated in a Digital Inclusion Week Celebration, organized by NTIA, which brought together digital equity organizations in the D.C. area to celebrate Digital Inclusion Week and promote partnerships between the attending advocates.
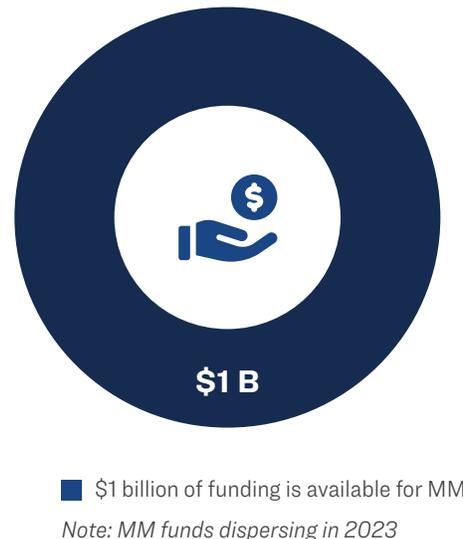

TOTAL $2.75 B

$53 M

$2.69 B

■ Remaining DE Funding Available
■ DE Planning Funds Dispersed

Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program

| 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2026+ |

Apps — 5-Year Deployment

NOFO Live 5/13   **Due** 9/30   **Rolling Awards** Occuring in 2023

The Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure program provides $1 billion to expand middle mile Internet infrastructure and reduce the cost of connecting unserved and underserved areas.[13] The Middle Mile program is key to increasing the resilience of Internet infrastructure by promoting the creation of alternate network connection paths designed to prevent single point broadband network failures.

The Middle Mile team used OICG's notable virtual presence to reach as many stakeholders as possible, hosting 12 office hours with 1,547 people and organizations. These sessions provided prospective applicants with information, resources, and guidance in preparing high-quality applications. Several office hours were stakeholder-focused (state, territories, and D.C.; Tribal organizations; local and regional governments; industry; and non-profits), but all sessions were open to the public. As part of the public Internet for All webinar series, the Middle Mile team participated in 10 webinars to share more information about the program. These webinars covered every aspect of the application: top FAQs, the financial portion, the project portion, the application, and environmental, historical, and resiliency considerations. OICG received over 235 applications requesting more than $5.5 billion for the program. NTIA will complete review and selection so that rolling award announcements will be made in 2023.

$1 B

■ $1 billion of funding is available for MM
Note: MM funds dispersing in 2023

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13.   Total amount appropriated will differ from total grant funding due to administrative set asides.
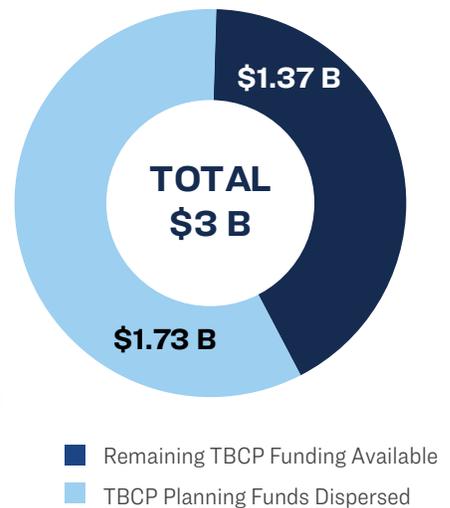
Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) of 2021 Broadband Programs

Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program

The Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP) is a $3 billion grant program directed to Tribal governments to be used for broadband deployment on Tribal lands, as well as for telehealth, distance learning, broadband affordability, and digital inclusion.[14] The TBCP was created by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 as a $1 billion program. In recognition of the overwhelming need shown by TBCP applications, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provided $2 billion in additional funding. In 2022, OICG awarded 132 grants totaling $1.73 billion. These awards, once complete, will connect approximately 142,000 Tribal Households and 1,680 Anchor Institutions. In the initial application window, OICG received over 300 applications requesting over $5 billion from the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. In 2022, OICG held seven Tribal consultations to hear from Tribes that the program structure and implementation was designed to fit their needs. The TBCP List of Awardees provides an up-to-date listing of the projects that received grants. The Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program continues to announce additional awards on a rolling basis. In 2023, OICG expects to release an additional Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program NOFO to distribute the remaining $1 billion in BIL funds.

As a part of the OICG-organized Alaska Broadband Summit and Workshop, NTIA used the opportunity to conduct several engagements related to the TBCP program. During the summit and workshop, OICG staff and NTIA leadership visited several sites around Alaska–including Bethel, Napaskiak, and Napakiak– to better understand the challenges of living in rural Alaska without affordable high-speed Internet. Assistant Secretary Alan Davidson participated in an Internet for All roundtable in Fairbanks, Alaska and announced $51 million in TBCP grants to Doyon, Limited and Ahtna InterTribal Resource Commission. Several other TBCP announcements were made over the week, including an additional $1 billion for the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program and a signed agreement with the Bureau of Indian Affairs to streamline environmental permitting for high-speed internet projects on Tribal lands.
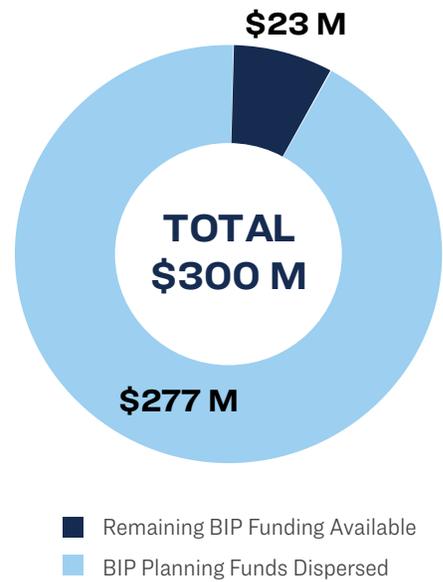

$1.37 B

TOTAL $3 B

$1.73 B

■ Remaining TBCP Funding Available
■ TBCP Planning Funds Dispersed

The (2021) Broadband Infrastructure Program

The Broadband Infrastructure Program (BIP) is a $300 million broadband deployment program, to support broadband infrastructure deployment in areas lacking broadband, especially rural areas.[15] The application window for this program closed August 17, 2021, with more than 275 applications submitted requesting over $2.8 billion in grants. BIP granted 14 awards in February 2022, totaling $277 million. The 14 awards allocated the entirety of the grant funds from this program. Construction on these projects is expected to begin between in early 2023, with more than 140,000 unserved households expected to be connected.

14. Total amounts appropriated will differ from total grant funding per program due to administrative set asides.
15. Total amount appropriated will differ from total grant funding due to administrative set asides.

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With the goal of assessing the impact these awards will have on the ground, OICG and NTIA leadership traveled to 10 states receiving grant funding. Specifically:

- OICG staff and Special Representative for Broadband Andy Berke joined Governor Janet Mills and state and local officials in the Blue Hill Peninsula region of Maine for an event highlighting ConnectMaine Authority's recent $28 million grant.

- OICG staff, Deputy Secretary Don Graves and Special Representative Andy Berke visited Jackson, Mississippi. During this trip, NTIA made a joint announcement for the $32 million in BIP funds awarded to the State of Mississippi. NTIA then spent the day participating in a roundtable with Mississippi HBCU leaders and speaking with local business leaders to discuss how we can work together to bridge the digital divide for over 12,000 households across the state, over 250 businesses, and approximately 26 Community Anchor Institutions.

$23 M

TOTAL $300 M

$277 M

■ Remaining BIP Funding Available
■ BIP Planning Funds Dispersed

Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program

The Connecting Minority Communities (CMC) Pilot Program is a $285 million grant program available to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and Minority-Serving Institutions (MSIs) for the purchase of broadband Internet service, eligible equipment, and the hiring and training of information technology (IT) personnel. In 2022, NTIA awarded 19 Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program grants totaling over $51.99 million.

In 2022, NTIA continued to review the more than 200 applications received during the application window, which closed December 1, 2021. Additional awards were announced on a rolling basis, with OICG ensuring that the final allocation of grant funds satisfies the statutory requirements that at least 40% of funds are distributed to qualifying HBCUs, and at least 20% are distributed to applicants that provide high-speed Internet access service and/or eligible equipment to their students. The CMC Anchor Community Dashboard is intended to assist potential applicants in better understanding the CMC Pilot Program and its requirements.

$52 M

TOTAL $285 M

$233 M

■ Remaining CMC Funding Available
■ CMC Planning Funds Dispersed

Further Information

Updated information on NOFOs, FAQs, Technical Assistance events, and other relevant topics will be published on BroadbandUSA and InternetForAll.gov as it becomes available.

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V. LEVERAGE DATA FOR DECISION MAKING

NTIA Managed Data Sources:

- NTIA Internet Use Survey
- Indicators of Broadband Need Map
- The National Broadband Availability Map (NBAM)

External Data Sources:

- FCC Broadband Funded Locations Map
- U.S. Census Bureau's Digital Equity Act Population Viewer
- Economic Impact of Broadband Investment

Expanding high-speed Internet access requires aggregating robust data sets that enable the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth (OICG) to effectively make inclusive and equitable program management decisions. OICG devotes significant resources to ensure that federal grants in broadband infrastructure are invested in unserved and underserved areas as directed by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). Using these datasets allows OICG to better coordinate interagency activities and institute a whole-of-government approach to ensure federal broadband funding is invested in unserved and underserved communities where the need is greatest. OICG manages these proprietary data tools on behalf of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) while leveraging third-party data to support interagency and stakeholder coordination. Further, OICG collaborates with NTIA's Office of Policy Analysis and Development (OPAD) to utilize the NTIA Internet Use Survey and other important data sources.

Interagency Agreement to Share and Collaborate on Data

On June 25, 2021, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and NTIA signed an Interagency Agreement to coordinate and share information on the distribution of funds for broadband deployment. On May 11, 2022, these agencies, and the Department of the Treasury (Treasury) signed a Memorandum of Understanding

(MOU) to formalize Treasury's participation in interagency consultations. The agencies consult with one another regularly and share data collected from programs administered by the FCC, the USDA's Rural Utilities Service, NTIA, and Treasury's Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund and State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund. This process allows for the coordination of activities, preventing the duplication of funding and ensuring that federal funds are spent in an efficient and effective manner. In 2022, NTIA, FCC, USDA, and Treasury held 24 scheduled meetings.

NTIA Managed Data Sources

NTIA Internet Use Survey

For nearly 30 years, the NTIA Internet Use Survey has provided valuable data to policymakers about the state of the Internet and technology device use in the United States. Many researchers, advocates, and stakeholders also use the Survey to better inform their work. The 2021 Internet Use Survey, released in May 2022, represents the first comprehensive federal data on the evolution of Internet usage in America since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NTIA Data Explorer, a clearinghouse of Survey data, enables easy tracking of metrics and helps guide important policy choices related to digital equity and other priorities. The Digital Equity Act of 2021 requires NTIA to use the Survey as the data source in the funding formula that calculates award amounts for the $1.5 billion State Digital Equity Planning and Capacity Grant programs.

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Indicators of Broadband Need Map

In 2021, NTIA released the Indicators of Broadband Need Map (IBNM), which displays key measures of broadband needs across the country. The publicly available IBNM compiles data from both public and private sources on one easy-to-understand interface. It aggregates data at the county, census tract, and census block level from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), M-Lab, Ookla, and Microsoft. Speed-test data provided by M-Lab and Ookla help illustrate the reality that communities experience when going online, with many parts of the country reporting speeds that fall below the FCC's current benchmark for fixed broadband service of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload.

This map allows users to geospatially compare different data, like areas of poverty and lack of broadband access. Users can toggle separate datasets on and off to compare information and search for specific locations to better understand where broadband needs are greatest. The dataset allows users to see where high-poverty communities are located and how that relates to Internet usage, as well as to a lack of computers and related equipment. The map also shows usage patterns in Tribal communities and Minority-Serving Institutions, which have historically suffered from a lack of Internet access.

The National Broadband Availability Map (NBAM)

NTIA offers a Geographic Information System (GIS) platform called the National Broadband Availability Map (NBAM) to state governments and federal partners. This mapping platform provides more complex tools for analyzing broadband access, such as uploading GIS files to compare proposed projects and allowing states and

others to better inform broadband projects and funding decisions. The NBAM includes data from the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Economic Development Administration, the Minority Business Development Agency, the U.S. Census Bureau, USDA, FCC, Treasury, Ookla, M-Lab, the Northern Border Regional Commission, BroadbandNow, White Star, and state governments. Users, including administrators from 39 participating states, three territories, and eight federal agencies, access the NBAM mapping platform and use these data resources to better inform broadband projects and funding decisions.

External Data

FCC Broadband Funding Map

Section 60105 of the BIL directs the FCC to develop "an online mapping tool to provide a locations overview of the overall geographic footprint of each broadband infrastructure deployment project funded by the Federal Government."[16] The FCC's Broadband Funding Map will be "the centralized, authoritative source of information on funding made available by the Federal Government for broadband infrastructure deployment in the United States."[17] Over the past year, OICG provided input to the FCC to assist in the development of this resource, including advising on the necessary functionality, data elements, and processes. In its interagency coordination role, OICG also facilitated meetings between the FCC and other government agencies that fund broadband infrastructure to provide similar input.

The launch of the Broadband Funding Map will allow the public to see the locations where funding commitments have been made by the FCC and other federal agencies, which will assist in maximizing other federal, state, and local investments. OICG will continue collaborating across the federal government, promoting the use of consistent data standards for broadband funding recipient reporting and developing processes and tools to analyze the economic and social impact of federal broadband funding.

U.S. Census Bureau's Digital Equity Act Population Viewer

NTIA works with the U.S. Census Bureau (Census) and its data to better inform the funding of programs for
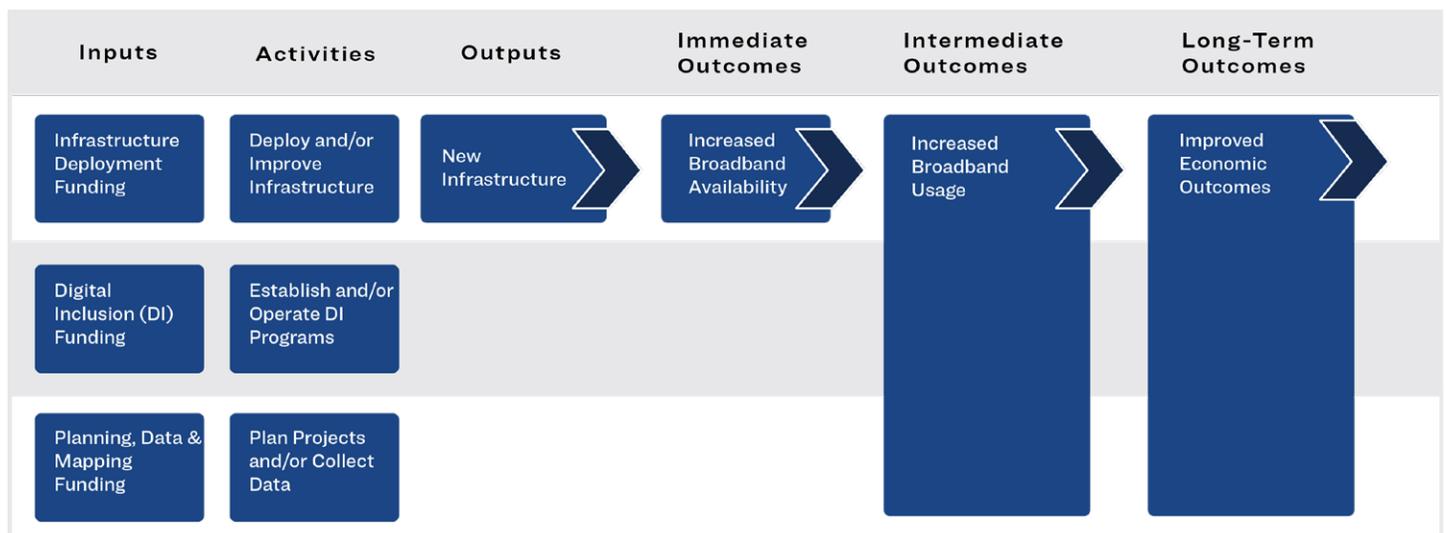
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16.   IIJA § 60105(b).
17.   IIJA § 60105(c)(1).

achieving digital equity. Census has released the Digital Equity Act Population Viewer, an interactive collection of maps that highlight various demographics and broadband Internet availability and adoption by state. The Population Viewer shows the size of the Digital Equity Act -defined covered populations in each state, alongside the percentage of the population lacking fixed broadband, lacking computer and/or broadband subscription, those not using the Internet, and those not using a device. The map also provides additional information about each of the eight characteristics that make up the covered populations under the Digital Equity Act of 2021. The Census mapping tool provides policymakers with information that is used to plan and implement digital inclusion and equity programs under the Digital Equity Act of 2021.

Economic Impact of Broadband Investment

In April 2023, NTIA released the Federal Broadband Funding: Investing in Internet for All Report. The Federal Broadband Funding Report aggregates and analyzes fiscal year 2021 federal broadband investments and tracks investments since fiscal year 2020. Data collected for the report was submitted by federal agencies as part of a data call; however, OICG anticipates leveraging public data

sources such as USASpending for future editions of the report. The report is accompanied by an interactive dashboard displaying the data submitted by the agencies and will be available in a spreadsheet for users to download.

It is expected that NTIA's goal to connect American households and businesses to high-speed Internet will lead to long-term, positive economic impacts overall. In 2022, OICG consulted with experts and reviewed studies estimating the potential or realized economic benefits of broadband infrastructure in alignment with the logic model (see below). Findings from those efforts led OICG to create an evidence-based conceptual framework summarizing the pathways by which broadband expansion could lead to economic benefits. Measuring economic outcomes as infrastructure and digital inclusion programs are deployed and adopted provides additional data to guide program planning and management decisions. The OICG and Census collaboration to produce the ACCESS BROADBAND Dashboard helps ensure that stakeholders and the public can easily track indicators of economic conditions that outcomes research suggests could be related to high-speed Internet access over time, at the smallest geographic scale available, as high-speed Internet availability and adoption increase over time. Indicators include statistics on employment, small business establishments, wages and income, poverty, home values, population change and migration, educational attainment, and Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Providing these data is an important step toward OICG's efforts to effectively analyze the impact of the grant programs.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Immediate Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
Infrastructure Deployment Funding	Deploy and/or Improve Infrastructure	New Infrastructure	Increased Broadband Availability	Increased Broadband Usage	Improved Economic Outcomes
Digital Inclusion (DI) Funding	Establish and/or Operate DI Programs				
Planning, Data & Mapping Funding	Plan Projects and/or Collect Data				

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VI. FACILITATE INTERAGENCY, STATE, TRIBAL, AND PRIVATE SECTOR COORDINATION

The Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth (OICG) leads the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) collaboration efforts across Federal agencies and with external stakeholders to coordinate initiatives that increase access to high-speed Internet across the country. OICG works with the Federal Funding Workstream, State Broadband Leaders Network, Tribal nations, industry, local governments, and the Digital Equity Leaders Network to provide support, technical assistance, and expertise as it works to close the digital divide.

Federal Funding Workstream

Federal Funding Workstream meetings provide Federal agencies a forum to share information on their broadband efforts and programs. Co-chaired by NTIA and USDA, these meetings promote coordination across the Federal government on broadband deployment and digital inclusion efforts. In 2022, OICG hosted 25 Federal Funding Workstream meetings, with 26 agencies participating and receiving follow-up materials after the call.

Stakeholder Engagement

In January 2022, NTIA requested public comments to help inform the priorities and programmatic designs of the new high-speed Internet grant programs authorized by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). The request for comments was a vital part of NTIA's strategy to encourage a broad and diverse set of stakeholders to inform program development. NTIA received 557 responses from state and local governments, non-profit and community-based organizations, schools, internet service providers, industry associations, other broadband stakeholders, and individuals. NTIA conducted hundreds of stakeholder engagement events, including listening sessions, webinars, panel discussions, and in-person and virtual individual and group meetings to garner additional input. The wide variety of perspectives improved the number and quality of ideas under consideration when NTIA was developing the Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the new grant programs and creating the application portals. These events provided guidance for the administration of the programs.

In addition, OICG coordinates a variety of stakeholder groups including the State Broadband Leaders Network, the Digital Equity Leaders Network, the Tribal-State Cohort, and the newly organized Tribal Broadband Leaders Network. These groups, comprised mostly of state, Tribal, or local government staff, convene to share best practices, solicit feedback, and connect attendees to federal programs and funding sources.

Stakeholder Relationship Management

NTIA implemented a robust Client Relationship Management (CRM) platform to:

- Streamline responses to stakeholder inquiries by using consistent preapproved language and referring to program FAQ's and NOFO's.

- Process speaking requests from industry groups, government agencies, community organizations and other external broadband stakeholders.

- Maintain a record of the number of engagements in which NTIA staff have presented, hosted, or attended.

- Serve as a digital record for email inquiries and event specifics, inquirer, host organization, and post-engagement notes.

The CRM platform streamlines data aggregation and analysis, while tracking feedback and the frequency of NTIA's public engagement.

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VII. BUILD CAPACITY OF COMMUNITIES

State Broadband Leaders Network

The State Broadband Leaders Network (SBLN) is a community of practitioners who work on increasing broadband deployment and access at the state level.

Digital Equity Leaders Network

The Digital Equity Leaders Network (DELN) is a community of practitioners focused on increasing digital equity, digital inclusion, and access at the local, county, state, regional, and community levels.

Tribal Broadband Leaders Network

The Tribal Broadband Leaders Network (TBLN) is a community of practitioners dedicated to expanding connectivity on tribal lands.

The Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth (OICG) capacity-building efforts connect state, local, and Tribal governments, industry, academia, and nonprofits to achieve positive broadband access, adoption, and inclusion outcomes. OICG's Digital Equity initiative further builds broadband capacity by facilitating individual and community-level access to broadband connections; providing Internet-enabled devices that meet their needs; and fostering the skills to explore, create, and collaborate in the digital world. In preparation for broadband deployments, OICG uses a coordinated, multi-stakeholder approach, engaging with industry, unions, training providers, academic institutions, and states to develop equitable broadband workforce opportunities.

In 2022, OICG expanded on the previous years' work to provide increased technical assistance, information resources, and outreach to states, territories, and Tribal nations to develop plans for high-speed Internet deployment. Key to this coordinated capacity-building effort is the BroadbandUSA program, which is housed within OICG. BroadbandUSA serves stakeholders that seek to expand broadband connectivity and promote digital equity and inclusion. Furthermore, it promotes planning

and funding efforts through solution-neutral guides and resources, as well as technical assistance resources. OICG also hosts local and regional coordination workshops that offer opportunities to convene broadband stakeholders across the country and share information.

NTIA supports stakeholders in building their capacity to enable effective broadband planning across the nation. The BroadbandUSA website uses OICG's technical expertise to educate the public on the importance of broadband, offer publicly available broadband planning and implementation resources, and host webinars. It contains a wide variety of information on the "how-to" of high-speed Internet deployment, including targeted technical assistance resources for the BIL programs. The Internet for All (IFA) website acts as an aggregator of information for Federal high-speed Internet programs still accepting applications. The IFA website provides information on webinars, office hours, and relevant programmatic announcements and press releases, including progress and funding announcements related to the BIL programs.

OICG convenes and facilitates three cohorts to promote innovation and growth by supporting efforts to expand

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broadband access and meaningful use across America. These cohorts, the State Broadband Leaders Network, the Digital Equity Leaders Network, and the Tribal Broadband Leaders Network, are part of a concerted strategy to engage state, territorial, Tribal and local governments, industry, and nonprofits that seek to expand broadband connectivity and promote digital inclusion.

State Broadband Leaders Network

The State Broadband Leaders Network (SBLN) is a community of practitioners who work on increasing broadband deployment and access at the state level. OICG coordinates the group and convenes participants to share priorities and best practices, discuss emerging telecommunications policy issues, link states and local jurisdictions to federal agencies and funding sources, and address barriers to collaboration across states and agencies. OICG also works with the SBLN to deliver technical assistance in support of states and territories participating in the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment program and the Digital Equity programs, facilitating interactions with communities, businesses, and organizations at the state and local levels. Through 2022, OICG held 20 meetings (virtually and in-person). These meetings included representatives from all 56 eligible states and territories and the newly hired NTIA Federal Program Officers (FPO) participating in the meetings and summits.

At the Summer 2022 SBLN Summit in Denver, CO, OICG brought together 219 state broadband staff in a hybrid environment to share priorities and discuss best practices and emerging telecommunications policy issues. The Summit agenda focused on the broadband programs authorized under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, digital equity, and local coordination to help state broadband staff connect every household. Speakers included representatives from NTIA, federal agencies such as the Federal Communications Commission, state broadband offices, and digital equity associations. OICG also hosted an opportunity for state broadband staff to meet with NTIA and National Institute of Standards and Technology representatives in an office hour setting.

Digital Equity Leaders Network

The Digital Equity Leaders Network (DELN) is a community of practitioners focused on increasing digital equity, digital inclusion, and access at the local, county, state, regional, and community levels. Participants include staff from local, regional, and state digital equity and broadband offices. DELN provides a monthly forum to strengthen policy and program connections among local and state jurisdictions and federal agencies to improve funding coordination, align policies, and strengthen collaboration across stakeholders. In 2022, the Digital Equity Leaders Network hosted 10 virtual meetings representing 90 local, regional, and state governments.

Tribal Broadband Leaders Network, Tribal Engagement and Consultations

The Tribal Broadband Leaders Network (TBLN) is a community of practitioners dedicated to expanding connectivity on Tribal lands. Secretary Raimondo first announced the Tribal Broadband Leaders Network on September 20, 2022, at the National Tribal Broadband Summit, hosted by the Department of the Interior. More than 130 participants, representing more than 70 Tribes and Tribal Entities, attended the first network meeting on October 13, 2022. The Tribal Broadband Leaders Network will allow NTIA to receive ongoing feedback on the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP), while connecting Tribal leaders across the country to share priorities and best practices, discuss emerging telecommunications policy issues, and identify engagement strategies with state broadband leaders. This forum for Tribal leaders will be essential to improving communication time between Tribes and the federal government.

NTIA is committed to increasing high-speed Internet access to federally recognized Tribal governments. In August 2022, NTIA and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) announced an agreement to coordinate responsibilities to deploy high-speed Internet service quickly and safeguard Native lands and interests.[18] This agreement complies with environmental, historic preservation, and cultural resources requirements related to the TBCP. Given the

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18.   See NTIA and BIA Sign Agreement to Streamline Environmental Permitting for High-Speed Internet Projects on Tribal Lands | National Telecommunications and Information Administration (doc.gov) (Retrieved 10/7/22).

BIA's role in the permitting processes and as the executive branch's intermediary with Tribal entities, NTIA and BIA meet regularly to ensure effective coordination. NTIA held a total of seven Tribal consultations in 2022. The consultations had a cumulative 796 participants. NTIA held a total of five TBCP-specific webinars with a cumulative total of 1,490 registrants to help prospective applicants understand the grant program and prepare high-quality grant applications. Additional webinars will be offered to continue outreach efforts and provide support to prospective applicants.

Industry Engagement

OICG recognizes the significant need for expanding the workforce which is critical in implementing these investments in high-speed Internet. In preparation for broadband deployment, OICG engages with stakeholders, unions, training providers, academic institutions, and states to create equitable broadband workforce investments as well as employment and economic growth opportunities across the country. OICG provides information to states and localities can prepare to ease workforce constraints and on workforce preparation activities such as, facilitating matching between workers and opportunities; investing in and promoting training programs & apprenticeships; bolstering state & local offices in size and capabilities.

OICG is working with industry and American manufacturers to prepare the domestic manufacturing supply chain for the required fiber, electronics, and equipment needed for broadband infrastructure deployment. In 2022, NTIA began work to secure commitments from industry to build needed manufacturing capacity, holding 14 supply chain industry engagement events. OICG also coordinates with the Office of Management and Budget to provide a streamlined process of informational support to industry-critical suppliers. A key priority in the planning and post-grant phase is assessing manufacturing capacity risks and building manufacturing capacity to ensure equitable access in areas of need.

Federal Funding Website

The federal government operates several programs to make funding available to states, local governments, and other eligible recipients that want to engage in high-speed Internet-related activities for their communities. NTIA works to expand access and increase connectivity across the United States by increasing awareness of federal funding available to close the digital divide. As part of that mission, NTIA annually updates the BroadbandUSA's Federal Funding Webpage, a comprehensive, "one-stop shop" of resources for potential applicants seeking federal broadband funding. The website provides information on funding opportunities as they become available throughout the year across federal agencies. Programs include high-speed Internet-related activities such as planning, infrastructure deployment, and digital inclusion.

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17.   See NTIA and BIA Sign Agreement to Streamline Environmental Permitting for High-Speed Internet Projects on Tribal Lands | National Telecommunications and Information Administration (doc.gov) (Retrieved 10/7/22).

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VIII. CONCLUSION

OICG will continue to work toward a future where everyone in America can access and use reliable, affordable, high-speed Internet service, connecting people... while fostering inclusive growth in the modern economy.

The Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth (OICG) is a mission-driven office working to connect everyone in America to affordable, high-speed Internet service. It coordinates with federal agencies, states, the private sector, educational institutions, nonprofits, and other external partners to implement its programs. OICG hired staff, solicited feedback, and received input from a wide range of stakeholders to inform design elements and management decisions for the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 broadband grant programs. In 2022, OICG disbursed the first planning grant funds from the new BIL high-speed Internet grant programs. It further advanced digital equity and inclusion by making funding decisions and continuing its work on prior high-speed Internet grant programs, including the Broadband Infrastructure Program, the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program and the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program. In the past year, OICG scaled up its operations, increased employee capacity, streamlined operational processes, and leveraged its prior experience in deploying broadband infrastructure programs to advance its capacity and position itself to implement the largest investment in high-speed Internet infrastructure ever made.

In the years ahead, OICG will continue to lead the way in closing the digital divide, funding broadband initiatives, and using data to improve digital equity and inclusion. OICG will expand coordination with organizations such as states, localities, Tribal nations, industry, community organizations, and nonprofits to build toward achieving universal access to high-speed Internet networks. OICG will continue to work toward a future where everyone in America can access and use reliable, affordable, high-speed Internet service, connecting people to broadband's engine of opportunity while fostering inclusive growth in the modern economy.

To follow OICG's work and continued progress managing its federal high-speed Internet grant programs, please visit BroadbandUSA and InternetForAll.gov.

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2022 Annual Report

March 2023