Schools and Libraries (E-rate) Program

Broadband Funding for Tribal Libraries

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Historically, Tribal communities have lacked
meaningful access to communications services.

"It is critical that Native American students have the
same opportunity as their non-Native counterparts
to access high capacity broadband Internet technologies.

Otherwise, Native children will be **left behind**
as education tools increasingly become digital."

- The Benton Foundation

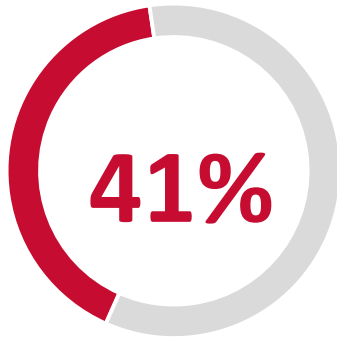Universal Service
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The importance of Tribal libraries

- 38% of Tribal libraries are the **only source of free public Internet** access in their communities*
    - They preserve language, sacred materials, acting as cultural guardians
    - They serve large and geographically diverse areas
    - They offer a connection to higher education
    - They provide Digitized content, eBooks, online catalogs, and the opportunity for research, job applications.

Why is broadband important?

- Prepares students with the skills they need for a 21st century economy

  - Improves educational outcomes

  - Broadband skills are essential to succeed in college and careers

  - Filling the homework gap

- Connects your community to the rest of the country, and the world

  - High-speed connections at schools can support broader plans to increase broadband access in Tribal Lands

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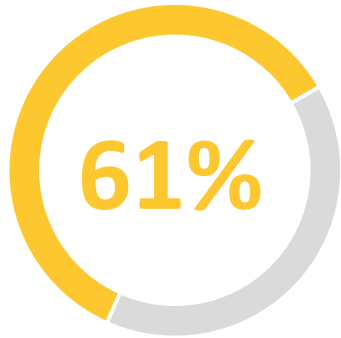## Tribal connectivity vs. nationwide

41% of Americans living on Tribal lands lack access to 25 Mbps / 3 Mbps broadband*

Compare to 10% of all Americans and 4% of urban Americans*

And 68% of Americans living in rural areas of tribal lands lands lack access*

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E-rate in Tribal libraries vs. nationwide

61% 61 percent of the nation's public libraries receive E-Rate discounts*

15% 15 percent of reporting Tribal libraries receive E-Rate discounts*

Over 95% offer free public Internet access*

90% offer free public Internet access*

Challenges for Tribal libraries

- On average, 50% of Tribal Libraries are unaware of the E-rate Program*
  - **Solution**: Attendance at conferences such as ATALM
  - **Solution**: Help us spread the word!
- Of the libraries that are aware, almost 30% find it too complicated or don't have the time to apply*
  - **Solution**: Having access to the Tribal Liaison and our resources

Broadband expenses as a challenge

- Affordability remains a primary roadblock to high-speed connections for schools
- Tribal libraries do not have the same funding sources as public libraries
  - **Solution:** E-rate funds can help. FCC's Schools and Libraries (E-rate) Program is designed to connect our nation's schools and libraries

Pay the education rate (E-rate)!

The FCC's Schools and Libraries (E-rate) Program provides discounts on broadband to schools and libraries

$3.9B in funding is available per year

Discounts range from
20% to 90%

Tribal schools and libraries usually receive a **80 to 90%** discount

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The application process

Determine Eligibility	Request Services	Evaluate Bids & Select a Service Provider	Request Funding	Invoice
Applicant must be an eligible entity and services requested must also be eligible for support	Applicants describe their service needs and post to USAC's website for service providers to bid	Applicant chooses the most cost-effective service provider	Applicants provide USAC with information about the services and service provider they selected	Applicant and service provider work together to request reimbursement from USAC for services

Who can get discounts?

- Libraries and library systems
  - Public, private, academic, research, Tribal
  - Bookmobiles and kiosks
- Elementary and secondary schools and school districts
  - Public, private, charter, parochial, Tribal
- Consortia
  - Eligible entities that band together to aggregate demand and negotiate lower prices

Story: Quapaw Tribe, OK

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Story: Quapaw Tribal Library (OK)

The Quapaw Tribe is located on the northeast tip of Oklahoma.

They have been committed **$44,000** since 2012 to increase their library's bandwidth and upgrade from DSL to T-1 lines.

"Because of the E-Rate funding we are able to offer a **faster Internet connection to our patrons** (T-1 line). Before we started receiving E-Rate funding, our Internet connection was DSL, which is much slower. Not having to pay for internet service means we are able to spend more on library materials. *

Patty Billings, *Librarian, Quapaw Tribe of OK*

Our commitment to Tribal outreach

- Tribal Training is designed to promote awareness and successful participation in the E-rate Program

    – **Goal:** reduce the digital divide and promote high-speed broadband connectivity to Tribal schools and libraries

- The E-rate **Tribal Liaison** is dedicated to helping applicants from schools and libraries on Tribal lands

    – Monthly conference call

    – Live training events

    – One on one outreach and training

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E-rate Tribal Liaison contact info

Mackenzie Howard

Tribal Liaison

Schools and Libraries (E-rate) Program

Contact me directly with your program questions or issues!

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Sources

Figures and facts from this presentation (asterisked) were collected from

1. ATALM's 2013 report on The Disconnect between the FCC's Schools and Libraries Universal Service Program (E-Rate) and Tribal Libraries: http://www.atalm.org/sites/default/files/ATALM%20E-Rate%20Brief.pdf

2. FCC's 2016 Broadband Progress Report: https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-16-6A1.pdf

3. Pew Research Center's Home Broadband 2015 report: http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/12/21/home-broadband-2015/

Thank You!

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