



TRIBAL BROADBAND CHECKLIST

This checklist is designed to provide Tribal communities with practical resources and measures to advance broadband planning and strategy. First, explore publicly available resources and tools geared for community broadband planning. Second, consider other organizations working in the broadband space and what services might already exist. Lastly, the checklist provides guidance on aligning the various components and stakeholders involved with broadband initiatives within and around Tribes.

Broadband Planning Data and Maps

Data collection and data analysis can be a little overwhelming for communities and organizations that are engaged in all sorts of community economic development planning, including community broadband planning. The goal of this checklist is to share some of the public resources that are available to you.



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Broadband Office: The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Grant web page has links to the latest BEAD data and maps, including: Preliminary BEAD project units, draft BEAD project units map, preliminary BEAD eligibility map, and a list of BEAD Letter of Intent applicants.



FCC National Broadband Map: Summarizes coverage by States, Counties, Congressional Districts, Census Places, Tribal Areas and Metro Areas (Does not include Towns, School Districts or other geographies that may be involved in broadband planning); allows users to check availability at an address; ability to filter access by speed, technology and year.



ESRI FCC Broadband Data Collection (BDC): The BDC feature layer in the ArcGIS Living Atlas shows: *Fixed* broadband availability by state, county, Census Tracts, Block Groups and Blocks; a count of the number of Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs) by their corresponding speed tier (served, underserved, or unserved) as of December 2023.



Penn State Extension National Broadband Navigator: The National BEAD Broadband Navigator Map includes: number of underserved or unserved BSL within a specified radius; number of BSL served by fiber within ¼ mile radius; percent of minority, low-income, senior, and school-age populations; areas served by electric co-operatives.

The resources listed in this checklist are not exhaustive – there are a lot of available sources of data. As your organization begins (or continues) to build an inventory of data for broadband planning, consider what data will best help you tell the story of your community's needs? Think about the specific questions

.a geographic information system can answer, the types of problems a data-driven strategy can address, and how these can help to inform the decision-making process.



For those interested in visualizing a comprehensive broadband planning tool, Penn State Extension and the Southern Rural Development Center, in partnership with the Rockefeller Foundation, will co-host a webinar designed to share new, publicly available, spatial analysis tools important for local community broadband development projects. The online meeting will be held December 5th, from 9 – 11 AM Central. Click on the QR code to register.

Considerations for Planning

In addition to building an inventory of planning data and tools, Tribal organizations should also take stock of the *expertise* and *services* available through existing (or developing) networks, intergovernmental agreements, and partnerships. Determine whether your Tribe has a contractual agreement for services, access to member services, or outstanding relationships with any of the organizations listed in the table below. For example, several Regional Planning Commissions are actively engaged in broadband planning. In the Driftless area, the Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission recently developed a detailed GIS tool to map features relevant to the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program. In central Wisconsin, the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission developed broadband plans for five counties within its service territory.

County or municipal planning, GIS, and zoning departments	County economic development organizations or departments	Wisconsin Counties Association
Public Service Commission – Wisconsin Broadband Office	USDA Rural Development and Rural Partners Network	League of Wisconsin Municipalities
American Planning Association – Wisconsin Chapter	Workforce Development Boards	Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
Regional Economic Development Organizations	Regional Planning Commissions	Wisconsin Land Information Association

ALIGNMENT OF BROADBAND EFFORTS

Community engagement around broadband efforts is crucial for raising awareness and ensuring that everyone understands the importance of digital connectivity. However, broadband expansion is not an isolated endeavor; it is happening simultaneously in multiple locations.

As Tribes advance their broadband initiatives, aligning these efforts with other ongoing projects within the tribe, in surrounding counties and municipalities, and on an inter-tribal level can significantly enhance outcomes. This alignment fosters collaboration, optimizes resource use, and strengthens advocacy, ultimately leading to more successful and sustainable broadband expansion and digital equity projects.

WHY: Alignment is Important

Unified Vision and Goals

- **Within the Tribe:** Ensuring everyone understands the project's vision and goals fosters collaboration and collective effort.
- **With Surrounding Counties and Municipalities:** Coordinating efforts and sharing resources with local governments builds trust and strengthens partnerships.
- **Inter-Tribal:** Collaborating with other tribes leads to shared learning, pooled resources, and stronger advocacy.

Efficient Use of Resources

- **Within the Tribe:** Clear communication ensures efficient allocation of resources and clarity in roles and responsibilities.
- **With Surrounding Counties and Municipalities:** Collaboration maximizes the impact of shared infrastructure and funding opportunities.
- **Inter-Tribal:** Joint initiatives attract larger grants and investments, benefiting multiple tribes.

Enhanced Problem-Solving

- **Within the Tribe:** Aligned communication helps identify and address problems quickly and effectively.
- **With Surrounding Counties and Municipalities:** Broader collaboration provides a wider range of solutions and support.
- **Inter-Tribal:** Sharing experiences with other tribes offers new insights and innovative solutions.

Stronger Advocacy and Influence

- **Within the Tribe:** A unified voice strengthens internal advocacy for the project.
- **With Surrounding Counties and Municipalities:** Coordinated efforts enhance advocacy at local and state levels.
- **Inter-Tribal:** A collective voice among tribes significantly impacts federal policies and programs.

WHO: Key Stakeholders and Communication Points

Within the Tribe

- **Tribal Council and Leadership:** Keep them informed about project progress, challenges, and successes.
- **Community Members:** Provide regular updates through community meetings, newsletters, and social media.
- **Project Teams:** Conduct daily or weekly check-ins to coordinate tasks and share information.

With Surrounding Counties and Municipalities

- **Local Government Officials:** Engage with mayors, city council members, and county officials to align on regional development plans and funding opportunities. Many have active Broadband Committees who are advising on broadband efforts.
- **Public Service Departments:** Coordinate with departments like public works, planning, and economic development.
- **Community Organizations:** Partner with local non-profits, schools, and businesses to leverage resources and support.

Inter-Tribal

- **Other Tribal Nations:** Establish regular communication with neighboring tribes to share best practices and resources.
- **Inter-Tribal Councils and Associations:** Participate in regional and national tribal associations to stay informed about broader trends and advocacy efforts.
- **Federal and State Tribal Liaisons:** Maintain contact with liaisons from agencies like the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and state tribal affairs offices.

HOW: Align Communications

Effective communication is the cornerstone of successful broadband expansion and digital equity projects. Clear, consistent, and targeted communication ensures that all stakeholders are informed, engaged, and aligned with the project's goals and objectives. This section outlines the key information that needs to be communicated within the tribe, with surrounding towns and municipalities, and inter-tribally. By addressing these communication points, tribal leaders can foster collaboration, transparency, and a shared vision, ultimately driving the success of their broadband initiatives.

Communication is Key

Within the Tribe

- **Project Updates:** Share regular updates on progress, milestones, and any changes to the project plan.
- **Goals and Objectives:** Clearly communicate the goals and objectives of the projects.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Ensure everyone knows their roles and responsibilities.
- **Challenges and Solutions:** Discuss challenges and solutions being implemented.
- **Community Impact:** Highlight the benefits of the project, including economic, educational, and social impacts.

With Surrounding Counties and Municipalities

- **Project Scope and Timeline:** Provide detailed information about the project scope, timeline, and key milestones.
- **Collaboration Opportunities:** Identify areas for collaboration, such as shared infrastructure or joint funding applications.
- **Resource Needs:** Communicate any resources needed from local governments or community organizations.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Ensure all parties comply with relevant regulations and policies.
- **Success Stories:** Share success stories and best practices to build trust and demonstrate the project's value.

Inter-Tribal

- **Shared Goals and Objectives:** Align on common goals and objectives for broadband expansion and digital equity.
- **Resource Sharing:** Discuss opportunities for sharing resources, such as technical expertise, funding, and infrastructure.
- **Joint Initiatives:** Plan and coordinate joint initiatives that benefit multiple tribes.
- **Advocacy Efforts:** Collaborate on advocacy efforts to influence federal and state policies and funding decisions.
- **Cultural Considerations:** Ensure cultural considerations are respected and integrated into project planning and implementation.

Steps to Align Communication

1. Establish Clear Communication Channels

- Identify key stakeholders and set up regular communication channels (meetings, newsletters, online platforms).
- Ensure information is accessible and transparent to all parties.

2. Develop a Shared Vision and Goals

- Engage all stakeholders in the planning process to develop a shared vision and set of goals.
- Document and communicate these goals clearly to ensure alignment.

3. Create Collaborative Platforms

- Use collaborative tools and platforms to facilitate communication and coordination.
- Encourage regular updates and feedback to keep everyone informed and engaged.

4. Foster a Culture of Collaboration

- Promote a culture of openness, trust, and mutual respect.
- Recognize and celebrate collaborative efforts and successes.

5. Monitor and Adjust

- Regularly review communication strategies and make adjustments as needed. It's a marathon- not a sprint.
- Solicit feedback from all stakeholders to continuously improve alignment.