

KAY IVEY
GOVERNOR



STATE OF ALABAMA

KENNETH W. BOSWELL
DIRECTOR

June 1, 2023

Stephanie A. Bryan
Tribal Chair and Chief Executive Officer
Poarch Band of Creek Indians
5811 Jack Springs Road
Atmore, AL 36502

Dear Honorable Tribal Leader:

On behalf of the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA), I am writing to seek a Tribal Consultation with the Poarch Band of Creek Indians to discuss ADECA's implementation of the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) and Digital Equity grant programs in Alabama.

ADECA is the administering agency for Alabama's BEAD and Digital Equity programs, which were created by the Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (Pub. L. 117-58). Through the IIJA, Congress allocated \$65 billion to states and Tribal Governments to expand access to high-speed broadband, strengthen digital inclusion, and help eliminate the digital divide.

ADECA will use this allocated funding, along with federal funding from other programs and state funding from the Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund, to develop programs that increase broadband access for unserved areas and expand digital inclusion throughout the state.

I respectfully request your participation in a Tribal Consultation session to help ensure ADECA understands and can include the Poarch Band of Creek Indians' recommendations and insights on critical issues related to these programs. We will conduct this Consultation in accordance with guidance from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) pursuant to the Tribal Consultation Policy of the Department of Commerce (5 U.S.C. Section 301).

The IIJA and NTIA require states to include Tribal Governments in the planning process for BEAD and Digital Equity, including consultation in plan development, needs assessment, and draft plan reviews. States are also required to consider broadband needs and goals of Tribal communities in their plans to expand broadband access to all unserved and underserved locations in the state. ADECA looks forward to developing an ongoing relationship with you so that we can coordinate long-term broadband planning efforts in Alabama.

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ADECA believes that the Poarch Band of Creek Indians is a critical partner in Alabama's broadband planning process. Through your insight into the unique challenges and needs of your community, as well as opportunities to address these needs, ADECA seeks to better understand the impact of broadband infrastructure projects on your Tribal land and how to protect and achieve environmental, education, and workforce goals of both the Poarch Band of Creek Indians and the state of Alabama.

ADECA requests this Consultation to discuss:

- ADECA's planning processes, implementation timelines, and plans for ongoing engagement for its BEAD and Digital Equity programs
- The Poarch Band of Creek Indians' strategic planning and prioritization regarding improving broadband access and digital inclusion to its community and an invitation to incorporate this planning into ADECA's statewide planning
- Coordination of any planning by the Poarch Band of Creek Indians to participate in NTIA's Tribal Connectivity Program and its broadband funding allocated specifically to Tribal Governments, with ADECA's planning for BEAD and Digital Equity programs
- Mechanisms for ongoing feedback, review, and engagement on these issues between ADECA and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians
- The Poarch Band of Creek Indians' understanding of the specific locations, communities, and surrounding areas that are most impacted by a lack of meaningful broadband access and the key barriers within those areas to improving access
- Unique considerations and strategies to increase adoption and support affordability of broadband services within the Poarch Band of Creek Indians' community
- Ways in which improved broadband access and digital inclusion within the Poarch Band of Creek Indians community will help achieve broader goals related to education, economic and workforce development, healthcare, and delivery of essential services

I am committed to conducting this government-to-government Consultation expeditiously so that ADECA will have the opportunity to incorporate The Poarch Band of Creek Indians' insights and needs into ADECA's ongoing planning and program development for BEAD and Digital Equity.


I would like to schedule the Consultation at a date and time that is convenient for you.

Please also forward any broadband planning documents, mapping, or analysis developed by your government or partners you are working with so that we can familiarize ourselves prior to the Consultation.

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Please contact me with any questions or to further discuss plans for this Consultation. I look forward to our ongoing coordination and cooperation on this important topic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K.W. Boswell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Kenneth W. Boswell
Director

KWB:MEN: ctp

KAY IVEY
GOVERNOR



STATE OF ALABAMA

KENNETH W. BOSWELL
DIRECTOR

September 6, 2023

Ms. Stephanie A. Bryan
Tribal Chair and Chief Executive Officer
Poarch Band of Creek Indians
5811 Jack Springs Road
Atmore, AL 36502

Dear Honorable Tribal Leader:

We are following up on our request for a Tribal Consultation with the Poarch Band of Creek Indians to discuss the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs' (ADECA) implementation of the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) and Digital Equity grant programs in Alabama.

ADECA is the administering agency for Alabama's BEAD and Digital Equity programs, which were created by the Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (Pub. L. 117-58). Through the IIJA, Congress allocated \$65 billion to states and Tribal Governments to expand access to high-speed broadband, strengthen digital inclusion, and help eliminate the digital divide.

ADECA will use this allocated funding, along with federal funding from other programs and state funding from the Alabama Broadband Accessibility Fund, to continue to develop programs that increase broadband access for unserved areas and expand digital inclusion throughout the state.

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians is a critical partner in Alabama's broadband planning process. I respectfully request your participation in a Tribal Consultation session to help ensure ADECA understands and can include the Poarch Band of Creek Indians' recommendations and insights on critical issues related to these programs. We will conduct this Consultation in accordance with guidance from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) pursuant to the Tribal Consultation Policy of the Department of Commerce (5 U.S.C. Section 301).

The IIJA and its implementing regulations require states to include Tribal Governments in the planning process for BEAD and Digital Equity, including consultation in plan development, needs assessment, unserved Tribal areas, and draft plan reviews. Through your insight into the unique challenges and needs of your community, as well as opportunities to address these needs, ADECA seeks to better understand the impact of broadband infrastructure projects on your Tribal land and how to protect and achieve environmental, education, and workforce goals of both the Poarch Band of Creek Indians and the state of Alabama. ADECA looks forward to an ongoing relationship with your community so that we can coordinate long-term broadband planning efforts in Alabama.

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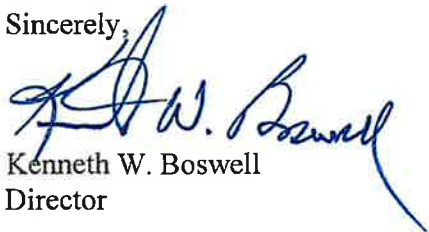
ADECA requests this Consultation to discuss:

- The Poarch Band of Creek Indians' strategic planning and prioritization regarding broadband access and digital inclusion and ways in which ADECA can incorporate this planning into its own statewide planning
- ADECA's planning processes, implementation timelines, and plans for ongoing public engagement for its BEAD and Digital Equity programs
- Coordination of any planning by the Poarch Band of Creek Indians to participate in NTIA's Tribal Connectivity Program and other broadband funding allocated specifically to Tribal Governments, with ADECA's planning for BEAD and Digital Equity programs
- Mechanisms for ongoing feedback, review, and engagement on these issues between ADECA and the Poarch Band of Creek Indians
- The Poarch Band of Creek Indians' understanding of the specific locations, communities, and surrounding areas that are most impacted by a lack of meaningful broadband access and the key barriers within those areas to improving access
- Unique considerations and strategies to increase adoption and support affordability of broadband services within the Poarch Band of Creek Indians' community
- Ways in which improved broadband access and digital inclusion within the Poarch Band of Creek Indians community will help achieve broader goals related to education, economic and workforce development, healthcare, and delivery of essential services

I am committed to conducting this government-to-government Consultation expeditiously so that ADECA will have the opportunity to incorporate The Poarch Band of Creek Indians' insights and unique needs into ADECA's ongoing planning and program development for BEAD and Digital Equity.

I would like to schedule the Consultation at a date and time that is convenient for you. Please contact Maureen Neighbors, Digital Expansion Division Chief at (334) 242-5467 or maureen.neighbors@adeca.alabama.gov with any questions or to further discuss plans for this Consultation. Additionally, if you have any broadband planning documents, mapping, or analysis developed by your government or partners you would like us to familiarize ourselves with, you may send those to Ms. Neighbors as well. I look forward to our ongoing coordination and cooperation on this important topic.

Sincerely,



Kenneth W. Boswell
Director

KWB:MEN:ctp