



# Cracking the Code in Partnering with Tribal Organizations

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# Partnering with Tribal Organizations

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# Introduction

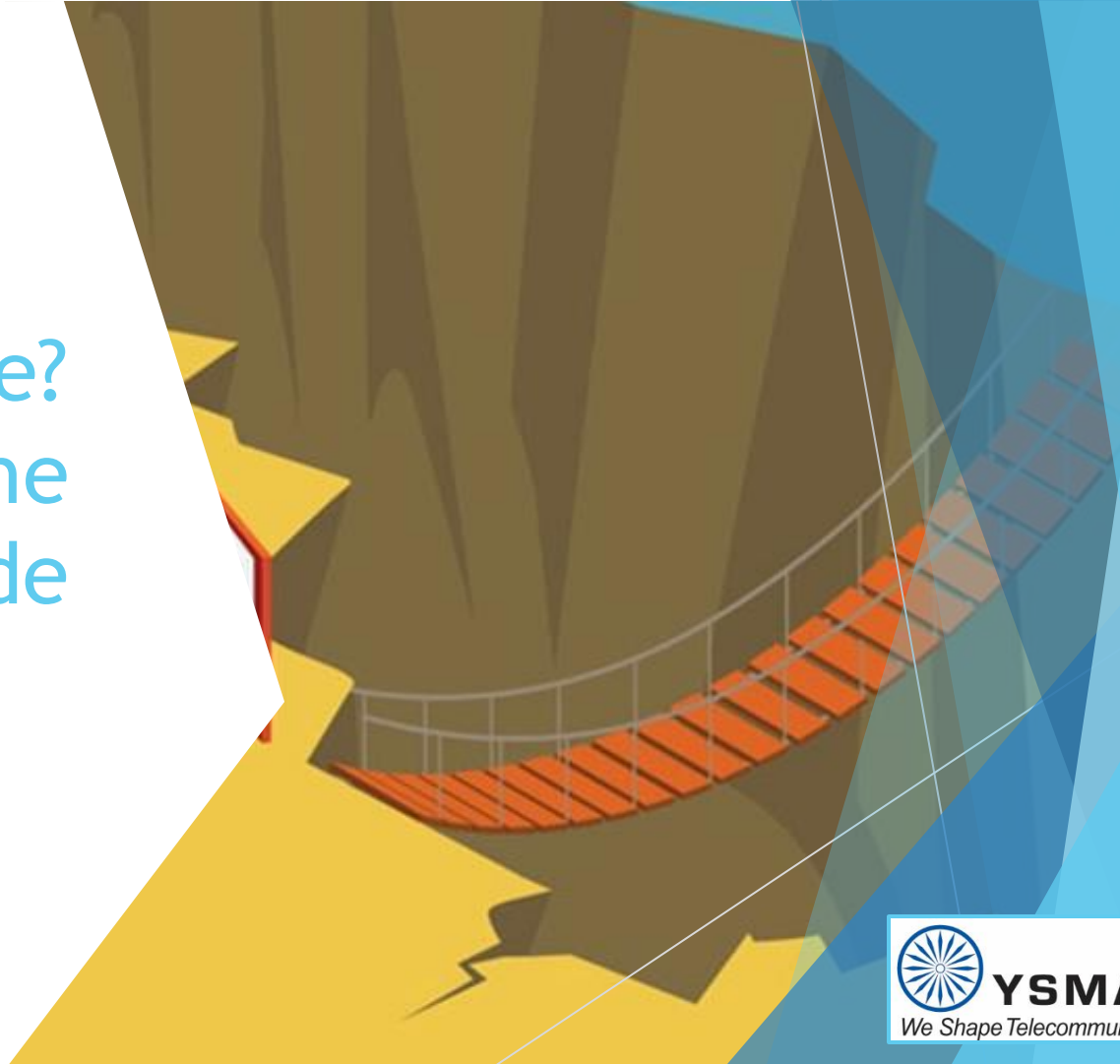
## David Ackerman

- ▶ 15 Years Telecom Experience
- ▶ Rural Telecom Engineering and Management Experience
- ▶ Tribal Telecom Executive Management Experience
- ▶ President, YSMA Telecommunications

## YSMA

- ▶ 18 Years of Engineering Experience
- ▶ OSP Planning, Engineering, and Management
- ▶ Grant Writing
- ▶ Program and Operations Management
- ▶ Long Haul, Middle Mile, and FTTX

# Why am I here? Bridging the Digital Divide



# Tribes and Tribal Broadband

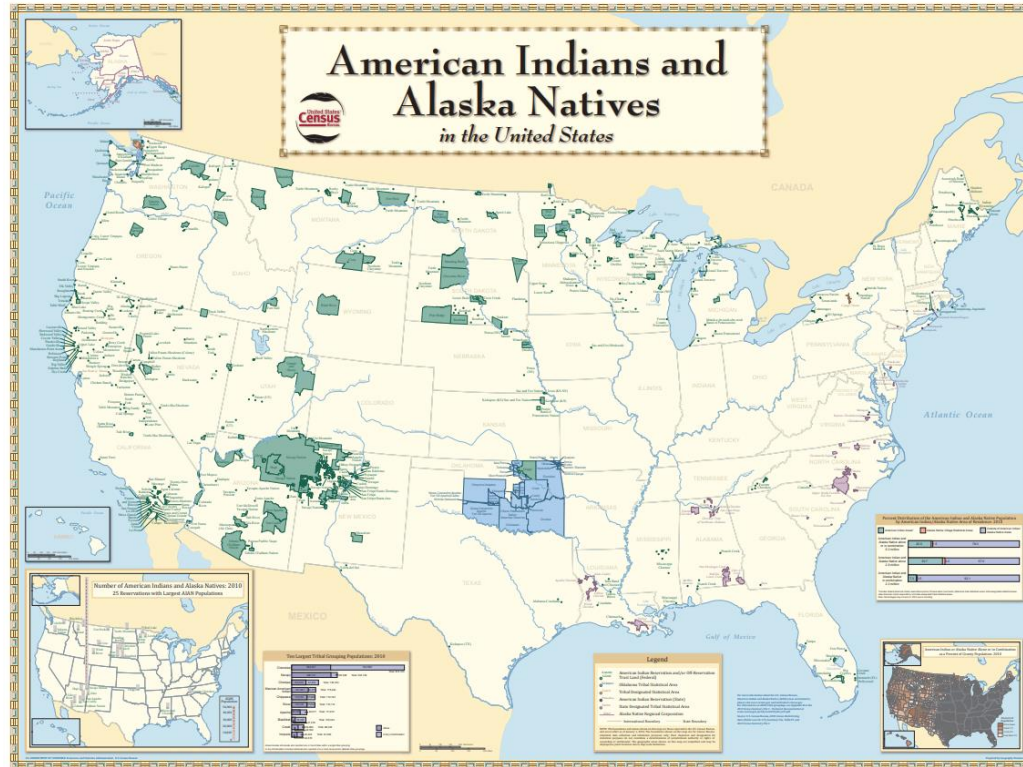
- ▶ Broadband is critical to modern life. But despite federal efforts, broadband access on tribal lands has lagged the rest of the country. In 2020, 18% of people living on tribal lands could not access broadband service, compared to 4% of people in non-tribal areas. Numerous federal programs are working to increase broadband access on tribal lands. However, tribes have struggled to identify which federal program meets their needs, and have had difficulty navigating complex application processes.

-GAO

Deployment of 100/10 Mbps Fixed Service to Non-Tribal and Tribal Housing Units (HUs)												
# providers	By Any Technology				By Any Terrestrial Technology				By Any Wired Technology			
	Non-tribal HU (000s)	Tribal HU (000s)	Non-tribal	Tribal	Non-tribal HU (000s)	Tribal HU (000s)	Non-tribal	Tribal	Non-tribal HU (000s)	Tribal HU (000s)	Non-tribal	Tribal
0	17,505	782	13%	45%	17,505	782	13%	45%	18,127	794	13%	45%
1	56,427	765	41%	43%	56,427	765	41%	43%	59,162	757	43%	43%
2	48,587	187	35%	11%	48,587	187	35%	11%	48,769	183	36%	11%
3 or more	14,734	17	11%	1%	14,734	17	11%	1%	11,196	16	8%	1%
Total	137,254	1,750	100%	100%	137,254	1,750	100%	100%	137,254	1,750	100%	100%

[DOC-357269A1.pdf \(fcc.gov\)](#)

# Tribes and Tribal Broadband



[American Indians and Alaska Natives in the United States \(census.gov\)](https://www.census.gov)



# Sovereignty and Trust

- ▶ Tribal sovereignty ensures that any decisions about the tribes with regards to their property (land) and citizens are made with their participation and consent.
- ▶ Prior to European contact, Indian tribes inherently possessed all powers of sovereignty.
- ▶ Each tribe began its relationship with the United States as a sovereign power; however, the powers of sovereignty have been limited by treaties and laws.
- ▶ What has not been expressly limited by the Congress remains within the domain of tribal sovereignty.
- ▶ Understand that tribal land is sovereign to the tribes.

# Challenges

- ▶ Getting in the door.
- ▶ Unique and additional permitting.
- ▶ Environmental and Cultural Clearances
- ▶ Time
- ▶ Trust
- ▶ Low population density.
- ▶ Cost of buildout.
- ▶ Lack of existing infrastructure. Poles/Conduit
- ▶ Lack of existing processes.



# Do's and Don'ts When Working with Tribes

## Do

- ▶ Be clear about your intentions.
- ▶ Bring the tribal leadership into the discussion early.
- ▶ Become a partner.
- ▶ Be patient.
- ▶ Offer to enrich the community.
- ▶ Develop tribally focused technical training and job programs.

## Don't

- ▶ Use traditional sales tactics.
- ▶ Act as though you have the right to build on their land.
- ▶ Build and ask for forgiveness.
- ▶ Underestimate the need for PR and community support.
- ▶ Forget that there is a real need for broadband in tribal communities.

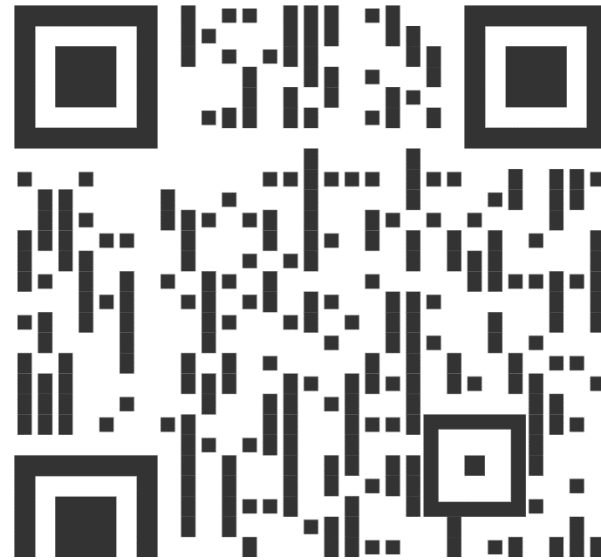
# Case Studies

## Company A

- ▶ Long haul provider looking to traverse a reservation.
- ▶ Met with tribal leadership in the discovery stage. Do not wait until you are making plans.
- ▶ Offers: Revenue share of traffic over the network on tribal lands.
- ▶ Offers backhaul to nearest metro.
- ▶ Offers dark fiber along route.
- ▶ Commits to funding and developing training program for tribal workforce development group.
- ▶ Agrees to respect the sovereignty of tribal land and will follow all licensing requirements as well as permitting requirements.

## Company B

- ▶ ISP looking to serve members of a tribal community.
- ▶ “Helped” write a grant for infrastructure.
- ▶ Took advantage of the tribes' trust and wrote in ownership of fiber infrastructure.
- ▶ Did not participate in community events or help improve lives of community members.



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# Thank you!

Questions?

