



Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Office of Native Affairs and Policy

**From:** Native <Native@fcc.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 5, 2024 3:17 PM  
**Subject:** FCC Seeking Comment on Alaska Connect Fund

Greetings from the Federal Communications Commission.

Last fall, the Commission released the Alaska Connect Fund Notice of Proposed Rulemaking ([FCC-23-87](#)) (NPRM), which seeks comment on establishing the Alaska Connect Fund -- the next phase of high-cost support for fixed and mobile carriers in Alaska -- following the conclusion of the current Alaska Plan. The NPRM seeks comment on how to ensure access to reliable and secure advanced voice and broadband service in Alaska. Specifically, the NPRM seeks comment on:

- The amount of the overall budget and how to distribute funding, for example, whether to develop a competitive process;
- The type of technology and services eligible for funding and whether the Commission should provide funding for satellite services;
- What areas of Alaska should be eligible for support;
- The length of the program and timing for when it should begin;
- How to coordinate Alaska Connect Fund support with other federal and state funding for broadband deployment in Alaska, for example the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program funding;
- Carrier requirements like speed, pricing, data usage requirements, interim deployment milestones, and performance plans;
- How to ensure carrier accountability for the services promised to Alaskans.

The Commission also seeks comment on multiple issues concerning Alaska Tribal governments, Tribal lands, and residents of Tribal lands in Alaska.

Specifically, the NPRM seeks comment on the following:

- What progress has been made as a result of Tribal-specific broadband funding available and received in Alaska to date and what is the status of services available today;
- Whether the services being provided to Tribal Nations and Tribal lands in Alaska are affordable;
- Whether there is a need to revisit the definition of Tribal lands in Alaska -- are there Tribal Nations, Tribal lands or Tribal entities in Alaska that do not fit into the current

definition of “Tribal lands” in section 54.5 of the Commission’s rules, but should be included for the purpose of the Alaska Connect Fund?

- Whether and what barriers still exist for Tribal Nations in obtaining ETC status and how can the Commission streamline the ETC process or other processes to increase Tribal Nation access to Alaska Connect Fund support;
- The experience of Tribal Nations in Alaska with the Commission’s Tribal engagement requirement, which is an annual obligation that requires carriers to demonstrate that they have meaningfully engaged Tribal governments in their support areas, and what the consequences should be for failures to meet this requirement;
- Whether the Commission should require Tribal consent, similar to that of the BEAD program or otherwise, for carriers serving on Tribal Lands in Alaska.

The reply comment period for the NPRM closes on February 15, 2024. Filing comments and data helps the Commission make informed decisions about how to structure its programs. If you would like to file comments, you may file them using the Commission’s Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS), <https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/filings/standard> under proceeding WC Docket No. 23–328, which is specific to the Alaska Connect Fund proceeding. Please email [native@fcc.gov](mailto:native@fcc.gov) with any questions about filing comments with the Commission.

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