

Improving Quality of Life

Access to modern telecommunications services is critical to the successful development of all communities. Among other benefits, telecommunications access enhances:



Educational and learning opportunities through access to the Internet;



Employment and business opportunities;



Public safety services, including access to emergency services and long distance medical services; and



Access to government services.

The FCC is committed to facilitating increased access to telecommunications in Indian Country. Through ITI, the FCC fosters partnerships to target specific concerns, identify potential solutions, and bring affordable, quality telecommunications services to Native American tribes and Alaska Native communities.



Indian Telecom Initiatives



For more information on Indian Telecom Initiatives, visit our Web site, www.fcc.gov/cgb, or contact the Federal Communications Commission Toll-Free 1-888-CALL-FCC (voice) (1-888-225-5322) 1-888-TELL-FCC (TTY) (1-888-835-5322)

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Introduction

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC or the Commission) regulates the Nation's telecommunications services, including traditional telephone service, wireless and satellite telecommunications services, cable services, television broadcast and radio services. The FCC seeks to ensure all Americans, including those living in Native American and Alaska Native tribal communities, have access to affordable, quality telecommunications services.

To achieve this goal, the Commission designed the Indian Telecommunications Initiatives (ITI), a comprehensive FCC program that seeks to promote understanding, cooperation and trust among...

-  Native American tribes, Native American tribal organizations and Alaska Native communities,
-  the FCC and other government agencies, and
-  the telecommunications industry.

Telecom-Related Goals

-  Increase the telephone penetration rate - the number of people who have telecommunications services - among Native American tribes and Alaska Native communities.
-  Increase telecommunications infrastructure - the installation of telecommunications equipment necessary to provide telecommunications services.



Inform consumers in Indian Country about financial support available through federal government programs, including Universal Service discounts.

TI Elements

Interactive Regional Workshops:

The FCC offers interactive regional workshops to provide "how to" information about telecommunications services and telecommunications infrastructure development. Workshop participants include tribal, federal agency and communications industry representatives. The workshops address telecommunications issues facing Indian Country with the goal of providing clear, practical information tribes can use to gain access to critical telecommunications services. Regional workshops acknowledge different tribes are at different stages of economic development, and their experiences with telecommunications deployment vary.

FCC Outreach:

Key, senior FCC officials and staff attend and participate in conferences, meetings, and other events sponsored by American Indian tribes, tribal organizations and others interested in Indian Country issues. These outreach activities provide the FCC with an opportunity to establish beneficial relationships with tribal governments, organizations and their members and to listen and learn about the telecommunications needs of these constituencies. They also provide an opportunity for the FCC to distribute information about rules and policies affecting telecommunications services in Indian Country.

One-on-One Meetings:

FCC staff is available to meet with individual tribes to address their unique telecommunications issues. Meetings provide a forum for an individual tribe to explore FCC rules and programs affecting the provision of telecommunications services to its members.

Educational Materials:

The FCC distributes educational materials to American Indian tribes and tribal organizations about issues of interest, including Universal Service Low-Income programs like enhanced Lifeline and Link-Up.

Direct mailings are made to the more than 550 federally recognized tribes and 20 tribal associations.

Other Programs:

In consultation with tribal governments and tribal organizations, the FCC continues to analyze and explore other initiatives that will assist it in fulfilling ITI goals and objectives.

Eastern Lakota deerhide coat with quilled decoration, ca. 1890. Photo by Katherine Fogden, Courtesy, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution.

