

Final Semiannual Status Report on NTIA's Broadband Programs

July 30, 2024 (OIG-24-033-I)



Why This Matters

Broadband is an essential component of modern life and a requirement for economic growth, education, healthcare, and public safety. Maximizing broadband coverage and meaningful use is imperative for national and individual success.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) is the executive branch agency that is principally responsible for advising the President on telecommunications and information policy issues. One focus of the agency's programs and policymaking is expanding U.S. broadband Internet access and adoption.

NTIA is currently responsible for administering six different broadband programs. The funding for these programs has been provided by the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA), 2021 and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

Grants awarded as part of the broadband programs are intended to expand broadband use in America; lay the groundwork for sustainable economic growth, better education, public safety, and healthcare; and advance other national priorities.

The Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General has been charged with overseeing the administration of these grant programs. See p. 18 for more on our oversight of NTIA's broadband grants.

Our Reviews

This is the fourth in a series of semiannual reviews by the Office of Inspector General's Broadband Oversight Division. These reports provide the status of the following NTIA-administered grant programs that received broadband funding under CAA, 2021 and IIJA:

- Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD)
- Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP)
- Digital Equity Act Programs (DE; these include the DE Planning, DE Capacity, and DE Competitive grant programs)
- Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program (MMG)
- Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program (CMC)
- Broadband Infrastructure Program (BIP)

Total Funding Status as of 6/28/2024

Program	Amount Appropriated	Grants Awarded	Current Obligations
BEAD	\$42,450,000,000	56	\$4,565,946,573
TBCP	\$3,000,000,000	226	\$1,861,687,578
DE Planning	\$2,750,000,000 ^a	56	\$53,702,029
DE Capacity		55	\$9,200,546
MMG	\$1,000,000,000	38	\$968,313,129
CMC	\$285,000,000	93	\$262,852,127
BIP	\$300,000,000	14	\$282,785,260

^a The appropriated amount shown here is for the three DE grant programs (DE Planning, Capacity, and Competitive) combined. To date, DE Competitive has not begun awarding grants.

This report follows the *Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation*. It does not make recommendations.

Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Updates

Where's the money?

56 awards funded

\$4,565,946,573 obligated

\$94,632,152 drawn down (2.1 percent of award funding)

What's the status?

Required reports received

As of April 23, 2024, NTIA has received all required semiannual financial and technical progress reports. The reports describe how recipients expended their grant funds and the status of their projects.

56 project action plans approved

As of June 13, 2024, NTIA has received and approved the 5-year action plans from all 56 recipients.

15 initial proposals approved

After receiving a formal notice of allocations, each recipient had 180 days to submit an initial proposal for running the grant program, including explaining how it intends to use all available funding to ensure every resident's access to a reliable, affordable, high-speed broadband connection.

NTIA received initial proposals from all 56 recipients by the December 27, 2023, due date. As of June 28, 2024, NTIA has approved the proposals from 15 recipients: Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Nevada, New Hampshire, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Washington, and West Virginia.

What's next?

NTIA continues to review and approve initial proposals. After approving each proposal, NTIA will make available at least 20 percent of the recipient's total allocated grant amount.

Within 1 year of the approval of its initial proposal, each recipient must submit a final proposal that details, among other topics, the outcome of the subrecipient selection process and how the recipient will ensure service to all unserved and underserved locations.

Each recipient is also required to submit a federal financial report (Standard Form 425) and a technical progress report twice a year, by January 30 and July 30.

About BEAD

What's the total appropriation and funding authority?

\$42.45 billion under IIJA

Approximately **\$810 million** is allocated for administrative expenses*

What's the program's purpose?

Broadband planning, deployment, mapping, equity, and adoption activities

Who's eligible?

56 eligible entities:

- All 50 states
- Washington, DC
- U.S. territories (Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands)

* Pursuant to CAA, 2024's transfer authority, NTIA transferred administrative funds from BEAD to the administrative funds for MMG, CMC, and BIP. The amounts in this report reflect the administrative expenses currently allocated for each program after the transfers.

Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program

Where's the money?

226 projects funded

\$1,861,687,578 obligated

\$202,206,403 drawn down (10.9 percent of award funding)

NOTE: NTIA announced a second round of TBCP funding in July 2023 while continuing to finalize awards from the first round. We summarize the status of each funding round below.

Funding round I: What's the status?

20 awards reached project end dates

As of June 30, 2024, 20 round I awards have reached their project end dates and are in the closeout phase.

Required reporting in progress

The U.S. Department of Commerce is transitioning to a new grants management system. Due to this transition, the Department's Office of Acquisition Management gave recipients another extension for submitting their semiannual performance and financial reports. Reports due on October 30, 2023, were extended until May 31, 2024. NTIA stated that it expected recipients to submit performance reports covering activities from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024. NTIA received over 85 percent of performance and final reports that were provided extensions.

NTIA also continues to provide technical assistance to recipients to navigate the new grants system so they can submit their performance progress reports and federal financial reports on time for the next reporting period.

Outreach and assistance ongoing

In addition to updating existing technical assistance materials to align with the new grants management system, NTIA continues to develop and implement activities and materials for technical assistance and monitoring, including a Frequently Asked Questions, program fact sheet, application guidance, budget guidance, webinars, and office hours. In addition,

NTIA hosts monthly Tribal Broadband Leaders Network meetings and has held one in-person meeting. The next in-person meeting is scheduled for September 2024.

NTIA is also continuing training sessions for site visits and desk reviews.

Funding round 2: What's the status?

Application submission period closed

The application submission deadline was March 22, 2024. The second notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) made approximately \$980 million available for additional projects.

Tribes that did not receive funding or that received equitable distributions awards for planning projects during the first funding round will receive priority for funding under the second NOFO. NTIA will also prioritize funding for infrastructure deployment projects and expects to allocate up to \$100 million for standalone broadband use and adoption (digital inclusion) projects.

All applications must pass initial, merit, and programmatic review to be awarded. Projects that are only for planning, feasibility, or sustainability studies are not allowed in this round of funding.

164 applications received

NTIA received 164 applications with a total of \$2.64 billion in funding requests. NTIA has completed its application intake process and the initial eligibility and administrative review process. NTIA is now conducting the merit review and programmatic review processes.

What's next?

TBCP round 1

Each award recipient is required to submit a federal financial report and a technical progress report twice a year, for the periods ending March 31 and September 30.

Award recipients that have reached their project end dates must submit their final financial reports within 120 days after the end of the project period.

TBCP round 2

NTIA expects to make the first awards in early September 2024 and will make awards thereafter.

By early October 2024, recipients will begin submitting baseline reports, as applicable. A baseline report is submitted once at the beginning of the project and provides projected goals and planned activities from award start date to closeout.

About TBCP

What's the total appropriation and funding authority?

\$1 billion under CAA, 2021; **\$2 billion** under IIJA

Up to **\$157.4 million** is allocated for administrative expenses

What's the program's purpose?

Broadband infrastructure deployment, telehealth, distance learning, broadband affordability, and digital inclusion on tribal lands

Who's eligible?

- Tribal governments, organizations, and colleges or universities
- The Department of Hawaiian Home Lands on behalf of the Native Hawaiian community, including Native Hawaiian education programs
- Alaska Native corporations

Digital Equity Act Programs Updates

Where's the money?

State Digital Equity Planning Grant Program	<p>56 DE Planning grants funded</p> <p>\$53,702,029 obligated</p> <p>\$44,932,099 drawn down (83.7 percent of award funding)</p>
State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program	<p>55 DE Capacity applications received</p> <p>\$9,200,546 obligated</p> <p>\$0 drawn down</p>

What's the status?

All DE Planning awards announced	<p>DE Planning awards have been announced for all 50 states; Washington, DC; and 5 territories (Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands). NTIA issued a press release stating that with the submission of each digital equity (DE) plan to NTIA, each state now has a plan to connect communities with the resources they need to achieve digital equity.</p>
56 digital equity plans accepted	<p>Recipients had a year to produce objective-based DE plans that identify digital equity barriers. Since our last report, NTIA has accepted all 56 plans.</p>
DE Capacity program announced	<p>NTIA released the first DE Capacity program NOFO on March 28, 2024, making \$811 million in DE funding available for all 56 states and territories as well as native entities (Indian tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations). This funding opportunity includes funds appropriated for fiscal years (FYs) 2022 through 2024. Fifty-five states and territories applied for DE Capacity funds, with the application window for territories ending on July 31, 2024.</p>

NTIA made its first award, to Nevada, on June 26, 2024, and will continue to make awards through 2024. More funding opportunities will be available in the future.

Required reporting in progress

Each award recipient is required to submit a federal financial report and a technical progress report twice a year for the periods ending March 31 and September 30. As of April 23, 2024, NTIA has received all required semiannual financial and technical progress reports for the DE Planning grants. NTIA is also implementing a post-award monitoring and oversight process.

What's next?

DE Planning

NTIA will work with states and territories to close out their DE Planning awards.

Native entities can apply for funds in fall 2024 in conjunction with the DE Capacity NOFO.

DE Capacity

Once NTIA accepts a recipient's DE plan, the recipient can apply for DE Capacity funding. Applications from all 50 states, DC, and Puerto Rico were received by the May 28, 2024, deadline; applications from the other four U.S. territories are due July 31, 2024. As of June 30, 2024, NTIA had received three of the four territories' applications.

For Indian tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations, the application window is from September 25, 2024, to February 7, 2025.

This funding opportunity includes funds appropriated for FYs 2022 through 2024. More funding opportunities will be available in the future. NTIA will make additional awards on a rolling basis.

DE Competitive

This program will be established 30 days after NTIA makes the first DE Capacity award (no later than September 28, 2024).

About DE

What's the total appropriation and funding authority?

\$2.75 billion in IIJA funding:

- \$60 million for DE Planning
- \$1.44 billion for DE Capacity
- \$1.25 billion for DE Competitive

Approximately **\$154 million** is allocated for administrative expenses

What's the program's purpose?

Promoting digital inclusion and equity and ensuring that all individuals and communities can acquire the necessary skills, technology, and capacity to engage in the nation's digital economy:

- DE Planning (ongoing) provides grant funds for developing state DE plans
- DE Capacity (first NOFO released on March 28, 2024; NTIA must make initial awards by August 28, 2024) provides grant funds over 5 fiscal years to states, possessions and territories, and tribal entities to implement DE plans.
- DE Competitive (will be announced 30 days after first DE Capacity award) funds annual grant programs over 5 fiscal years for private sector, public sector, and nonprofit entities to advance digital equity and engage in digital inclusion activities.

Who's eligible?

All 50 states; Washington, DC; and Puerto Rico are eligible to apply for DE Planning and DE Capacity grants. Of the total funds available for these two programs, NTIA has reserved 1 percent for grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts with U.S. territories and possessions other than Puerto Rico, and 5 percent for grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts with Indian tribes, Alaska Native entities, and Native Hawaiian organizations.

Entities that are eligible to apply for DE Competitive grants include:

- Political subdivisions, agencies, or instrumentalities of states, including state agencies responsible for administering or supervising adult education and literacy activities, or for providing state public housing
- Indian tribes, Alaska Native entities, or Native Hawaiian organizations
- Non-school and nonprofit entities
- Community anchor institutions
- Local educational agencies
- Entities carrying out workforce development programs
- Partnerships of any of the above groups

Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Grant Program Updates

Where's the money?

38 awards to 35 entities representing 39 states and Puerto Rico

\$968,313,129[†] obligated

\$860,068,946 in additional investments by recipients[‡]

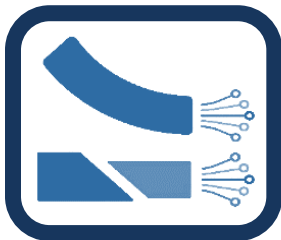
\$29,343,989 drawn down (3.0 percent of award funding)

What's the status?

All funds awarded

Funding covers 435 counties across 39 states and Puerto Rico.

Focusing on the "middle mile"



Middle mile Internet infrastructure carries large amounts of data over long distances, increases capacity to local networks, boosts network resiliency, lowers the cost of bringing high-speed Internet service to unconnected households, and helps connect unserved regions to the Internet backbone.

MMG projects are intended to deploy over 11,750 miles of new, future-proof fiber that will pass within 1,000 feet of over 6,900 community anchor institutions (support organizations such as schools, libraries, and healthcare providers).

Required reporting in progress

As of April 23, 2024, NTIA has received all required semiannual financial and technical progress reports.

NTIA holds weekly office hours and quarterly conference calls for recipients.

[†] This award amount is revised to reflect the termination for convenience of the \$11,684,088.90 Indian Michigan Power Company award and the descoping of two projects, Zayo (\$2,967,524.60) and Syringa Networks (\$806.73).

[‡] An MMG award cannot exceed 70 percent of the total project cost. Matching funds may be in the form of either cash or in-kind contributions consistent with the guidance in 2 C.F.R. part 200.

What's next?

Each award recipient is required to submit a federal financial report and a technical progress report twice a year, for the periods ending March 31 and September 30.

NTIA is training federal program officers to conduct site visits and desk reviews. NTIA will help recipients publicly post application and award materials.

On June 13, 2024, NTIA submitted its action plan to implement recommendations from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, *Broadband Infrastructure: Middle-Mile Grant Program Lacked Timely Performance Goals and Targeted Measures*, issued October 19, 2023 (report no. GAO-24-106131). In the report, GAO recommended that NTIA establish performance measures with specified targets for the program and a process for developing performance goals and measures when planning and designing other programs. NTIA concurred with GAO's recommendations.

About MMG

What's the total appropriation and funding authority?

\$1 billion under IIJA

Approximately **\$42 million** is allocated for administrative expenses

What's the program's purpose?

Funding construction, improvement, or acquisition of middle mile infrastructure

Who's eligible?

- Government (states, political subdivision of states, and tribal governments)
- Industry (technology companies, electric companies, utility cooperatives, public utility districts, telecommunications companies, and telecommunications cooperatives)
- Nonprofits and other associations (nonprofit foundations, nonprofit corporations, nonprofit institutions, nonprofit associations, regional planning councils, Native entities, and economic development authorities)
- Any partnership of two or more of the above that provide technical capability of expanding or extending middle mile infrastructure

Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program Updates

Where's the money?

93 projects funded

\$262,852,127 obligated

\$88,858,222 drawn down (33.8 percent of award funding)

What's the status?

All funds distributed



Distribution was complete as of February 22, 2022. The 93 recipients included:

- 43** historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs)
- 24** Hispanic-serving institutions
- 21** minority-serving institutions (MSIs)
- 5** tribal colleges and universities (TCUs)

Training in progress

NTIA continues to train federal program officers to conduct site visits and desk reviews. NTIA will begin scheduling site visits and desk reviews in 2024. These activities will be used to perform routine grant monitoring.

NTIA is beginning to train federal program officers on the redaction and public posting process.

Required reporting in progress

As of April 23, 2024, NTIA has received all required semiannual financial and technical progress reports.

Eleven recipients have asked to extend their periods of performance beyond the original 2 years. NTIA has approved six requests and is reviewing the rest.

What's next?

Four CMC recipients' periods of performance end July 31, 2024.

Each award recipient is required to submit a federal financial report and a technical progress report twice a year, for the periods ending March 31 and September 30.

Recipients have 2 years from the date of their award to complete their projects unless they request an extension. Final financial reports are due within 120 days of the end of the project.

Within 1 year of receiving their award and each year thereafter, recipients must submit an annual report describing how funds were expended, certifying that funds were spent in compliance with program requirements, and identifying all subgrantees. Recipients must also certify by October 30 each year that they have complied with all required statutory and programmatic conditions.

About CMC

What's the total appropriation and funding authority?

\$285 million under CAA, 2021

Approximately **\$22 million** is allocated for administrative expenses

What's the program's purpose?

The purchase of broadband Internet access service and eligible equipment or to hire and train information technology personnel at HBCUs, TCUs, and MSIs

Who's eligible?

- HBCUs, TCUs, MSIs
- Consortia led by an HBCU, TCU, or MSI that also include either
 - A minority business enterprise, or
 - An organization that is described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and is exempt from tax under section 501(a) of the code

Broadband Infrastructure Program Updates

Where's the money?

14 projects funded

\$282,785,260 obligated

\$120,239,530 drawn down (42.5 percent of award funding)

What's the status?

All funds awarded

The program was fully awarded as of March 2022. The 14 grant recipients included 13 states and one territory. The recipients have:

61 projects[§]

53 projects under construction

21,038 households served

2,753 route miles of fiber laid

Oversight and review in progress

All recipients that submitted no-cost extensions seeking more time to complete their projects were approved to extend their periods of performance beyond the original 1-year period. NTIA also approved additional no-cost extension requests from Maine Connect Authority; Logan County, West Virginia; Lumpkin County, Georgia; Sabine County, Texas; Scott County, Kentucky; and the State of Washington.

NTIA has scheduled site visits with two recipients: Scott County, Kentucky, in July and the State of Maine in August.

[§] The Missouri Department of Economic Development is descopeing its award and removing three projects, reducing the number of BIP-funded projects from 64 to 61.

Required reporting in progress

As of April 23, 2024, NTIA has received all required semiannual financial and technical progress reports.

As of March 29, 2024, 13 out of 14 annual reports have been received and initial reviews conducted. The remaining annual report was due May 31, 2024.

Recipients have completed 50 baseline reports.

What's next?

Each award recipient is required to submit a federal financial report and a technical progress report twice a year, for the periods ending March 31 and September 30.

Within a year of receiving their awards and each year thereafter, recipients must submit annual reports describing how grant funds were expended, certifying that funds were spent in compliance with program requirements, and identifying all subgrantees.

Recipients must submit their final financial reports within 120 days after their projects end.

About BIP**What's the total appropriation and funding authority?**

\$300 million under CAA, 2021

Approximately **\$14 million** is allocated for administrative expenses

What's the program's purpose?

Supporting broadband infrastructure deployment to areas lacking broadband, especially rural areas

Who's eligible?

“Covered partnerships,” or partnerships between a state (or one or more political subdivisions of a state) and a provider of fixed broadband service. A partnership may include more than one service provider as part of its application. If awarded funds, the governmental partner (that is, the state or its political subdivision or subdivisions) must serve as the lead applicant, assuming primary operational and financial responsibility for completing the project.

NTIA's Broadband Grant Management

As part of its management of broadband grants and funding, NTIA has:

- Hired more than 149 employees to support CAA, 2021 and IIJA programs
- Provided the following support via the technical assistance team since our last report in February 2024:
 - Continued responding to BEAD inquiries as federal program officers (FPOs) and regional directors review initial proposals
 - Provided extensive support to state and territory broadband offices (SBOs) as they run their BEAD challenge processes by hosting tailored, small-group office hours to answer specific questions, sending weekly emails to provide guidance to successfully navigate the challenge process verification process, and delivering training about NTIA's expectations and requirements for the challenge process
 - Designed training to be delivered in late summer and fall to support FPOs as their grantees prepare to run BEAD Subgrantee Selection processes to identify BEAD subgrantees
 - Continued to provide DE Planning closeout guidance and training for FPOs and broadband offices
 - Delivered training and support to internal DE Capacity application reviewers
 - Crafted a technical assistance package for potential DE Competitive NOFO applicants including webinars, application guidance, and FAQs
 - Reorganized technical assistance resources to make them easier for internal staff to reference, increasing their use and effectiveness
- Awarded over \$8 billion in grants across six of its broadband programs

On October 31, 2023, NTIA became part of a Department-wide effort to migrate data and files from the Grants Online system to the Grants Enterprise Management System (GEMS). The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration was responsible for migrating award files to the GEMS platform. NTIA plans to provide input on any challenges it experiences during the transition of applicable broadband programs to the OIG staff auditing GEMS' implementation (project no. 2023-467).

OIG's Broadband Oversight Efforts

Office of Audit and Evaluation

OIG's *Top Management and Performance Challenges Facing the Department of Commerce in Fiscal Year 2024* includes the following priority areas related to NTIA broadband programs:

- Ensuring funding is properly allocated and awarded to close the digital divide
- Overseeing broadband programs with challenging regulatory and NTIA requirements
- Optimizing workforce to manage increases in grant administration activities
- Implementing measures to prevent, detect, and report potential fraud and hold grantees and subgrantees accountable for performance

Considering the significance of these challenges and the amount of taxpayer dollars invested in broadband programs, OIG has been obligated funding under IIJA to provide oversight of NTIA's broadband programs. Our oversight enables us to anticipate and identify the increased risks that come with increased funding. This series of status reports reviews each of the current CAA and IIJA programs and the steps taken to plan, implement, and oversee the programs for compliance with NOFO requirements and federal policies and procedures. Our broadband division has initiated the following audits and evaluations as part of our ongoing oversight of NTIA's broadband programs:

- Evaluation of Broadband Deployment Challenges, Project No. 2023-455
- IIJA Administrative Funds Review, Project No. 2024-484

In FYs 2023 and 2024, we issued the following products:

- Evaluation: *NTIA Took the Necessary Steps to Implement the Requirements for Awarding Funds Under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021*, Report No. OIG-23-018-I
- Management Alert: *NTIA's Reliance on Self-Certifications Increased Fraud Risk for the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program*, Memo No. OIG-23-022-M
- Management Alert: *Challenges Industry Stakeholders Face with Broadband Deployment*, Memo No. OIG-24-015-M
- Audit: *NTIA's Award Processes Leave Tribal Broadband Grants Vulnerable to Fraud and Duplication*, Report No. OIG-24-019-A

As previously described, the audit of the GEMS program implementation (2023-467) may affect our broadband work.

Find a list of broadband-related work at oig.doc.gov/Pages/BroadbandOversight.aspx.

NTIA reviewed a draft of this report and provided a response with updated information, including numbers of grants, award amounts, and drawdowns as of June 28, 2024, as well as milestones and technical assistance information. We discussed the response with NTIA and updated the report as needed.

Office of Investigations

One of the priority areas in our FY 2024 *Top Management Challenges* report was “implementing the appropriate measures to prevent, detect, and report potential fraud and hold grantees and subgrantees accountable for performance.” To address this and other challenges, our Office of Investigations (OI) created and implemented a proactive antifraud strategy that supplements our audits and other reviews.

The goal of this strategy is to help the Department and NTIA deter and detect fraud through internal awareness, external awareness, proactive data analysis, and quality investigative products. The first phase of the strategy, which occurred before the award of IIJA funding, focused on coordinating with NTIA and other government agencies to identify entities with a stake in broadband funding and establish relationships to increase fraud awareness and support future investigative efforts. The second phase, which centers on targeted outreach to those specifically involved in the NTIA broadband programs, began after funding was awarded and is being continually implemented as new awards are announced.

Proactively partnering with NTIA to build an extensive outreach and liaison campaign to educate NTIA personnel, broadband funding applicants, and recipients is essential to this antifraud strategy. Through this educational partnership, OI has:

- Briefed stakeholders about fraud awareness, addressing in greater detail the issues noted in our *Top Management Challenges* report; for instance, OI provided antifraud briefings to BEAD grant applicants and recipients from nearly all U.S. states and territories, worked with NTIA to provide post-award antifraud briefings to BIP, CMC, MMG, and TBCP recipients, and participated in virtual question-and-answer sessions with recipients
- Regularly participated in and contributed to NTIA’s meetings with BEAD and MMG recipients to address antifraud best practices

- Continued to provide fraud awareness training to NTIA personnel, recipients, subrecipients, state-level oversight entities, and other stakeholders involved in broadband funding programs to enhance fraud deterrence and detection efforts

OI has also coordinated with NTIA to improve certifications of information that applicants, recipients, and subrecipients provide throughout the grant award lifecycle. Such certifications are effective accountability mechanisms; without them, it can be difficult to pursue certain remedies and hold recipients and subrecipients accountable. Requiring certifications, specifying that they relate to material requirements or information, and ensuring they are strong and carefully crafted, are critical measures for preventing fraud and abuse. OI has made suggestions to NTIA on draft BEAD and TBCP NOFOs that incorporated best practices for certifications and has offered other fraud prevention, detection, and resolution measures aimed at addressing the challenges accompanying this historic investment in broadband infrastructure deployment.

Further, OI has coordinated outreach and investigative efforts with the U.S. Department of Justice and other OIGs that oversee IIJA-funded programs. OI also meets regularly with OIGs that have oversight of other broadband funding programs to attempt to identify and prevent duplication of projects.

As awareness has increased and projects supported by broadband funding have progressed, OIG has received more complaints alleging fraud related to the use of the funds. All allegations are tracked to attempt to identify trends that could be used to enhance antifraud efforts, and OI pursues criminal, civil, and administrative investigations to hold recipients and sub-recipients accountable and to help ensure these funds reach their intended recipients and achieve their intended results. OI will continue to work with NTIA so NTIA can consider administrative remedies to help mitigate potential fraud identified during OI's investigations.

For more information about our oversight efforts, please contact Arthur L. Scott, Jr., Assistant Inspector General for Audit and Evaluation, at ascott@oig.doc.gov.