



ACLS Leading Edge Fellowship

Position Title:	Tribal Broadband Policy Analyst
Organization:	Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR)
Location:	Remote
Stipend:	\$66,000 in year one, \$70,000 in year two, plus health insurance, and \$3,500 per year in professional development funding
Start Date:	September 2023

ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

Founded in 1974, the [Institute for Local Self-Reliance](#) (ILSR) is a national research and technical assistance organization that constructs the foundation and frame upon which communities can take charge of their local resources, their economies, and their environmental future. ILSR challenges concentrated economic and political power, and instead champions an approach in which ownership is broadly distributed, institutions are humanly scaled, and decision-making is accountable to communities.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

ILSR seeks a Tribal Broadband Policy Analyst to conduct research related to and improve continuing efforts to support the development of equitable Tribal Internet access. Despite some progress, Internet infrastructure and digital skills training in Native Nations lags dramatically behind the rest of the country. Less than 60 percent of those living on Tribal lands in the lower 48 states have access to basic broadband connections. Native Nations have regularly - in formal and informal ways - been excluded from policy conversations about access to infrastructure, subsidies, digital skills, and a host of other issues needing solutions. As a result, Tribal residents miss out on educational, economic development, telehealth, social networking, and the panoply of other activities that build community resiliency and democratic engagement in the modern world. Tribes, which face the consequences of decades of formalized structural oppression, need Internet access now more than ever. With \$42 billion earmarked by the federal government for new infrastructure in poorly served locations, as well as \$2 billion specifically designated for new Tribal awards, we see that many Tribes aren't as prepared as they will need to be to get access to and use these funds in impactful ways.

One of the core components to this fellowship will be adding critical curriculum development expertise to ILSR's Tribal Broadband Bootcamps (TBBs) - multi-day training intensives that build capacity and connections in Indian country. This includes refining existing materials and helping respond to what will be a changing broadband policy, funding, and deployment landscape in 2023 and beyond. Some Tribes are in extremely remote regions and have been passed over for decades by Internet Service Providers who have avoided interacting with Tribes, leaving them stranded in connectivity deserts. Others have access to fast networks nearby, but can't afford to pay the prices being asked. In all scenarios, TBBs help arm participants with the information they need to address the set of challenges most pressing in their communities.

Other projects we imagine the Analyst would take on include: interviewing Tribal officials and residents in support of written and multimedia storytelling efforts to document the history of and current projects; continuing to deepen and improve ILSR's census of Tribal networks and their histories; developing policy briefs and informational and advocacy materials for local, state, and federal officials that translate Tribal needs to government officials; conducting primary source research to ensure that state governments are meeting federal requirements for broadband funding on Tribal lands; expanding ILSR's current work

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on the creation and sustaining of wireless Tribal networks; doing work that supports language and cultural preservation efforts using locally owned network infrastructure.

The Analyst will be folded into our Community Broadband Networks Initiative, including participating in strategy sessions, meeting with allied organizations, attending conferences and building a public profile, and helping develop materials for outside assistance efforts. We anticipate that the Fellow will support work being done by our broadband Outreach, Communications, and Research Teams.

The Analyst will gain experience working with advocacy and research organizations across a range of Internet topics, such as the digital divide, broadband infrastructure, coalition-building, device programs, aging in place, economic development, and affordability. The Fellow will be involved in critical policy development as Tribes take advantage of new federal and state funds to build needed networks as part of efforts to establish digital sovereignty. The fellowship tenure is 24 consecutive months, with an expected time commitment of approximately 37.5 hours per week.

Responsibilities and tasks:

- Cultivate a general expertise of the challenges and opportunities of broadband access in Indian Country, both urban and rural.
- Improve the Bootcamps by attending, designing and soliciting feedback from Native participants, and working on curriculum development and preparatory materials.
- Develop and expand ILSR's existing expertise on Tribal broadband issues, including capacity building, policy analysis, and empirical research.
- Develop and contribute to new and existing research and policy projects addressing issues like access, affordability, digital skills, availability, and digital devices.
- Expand current relationships and work with organizations like the Tribal Resource Center, the American Indian Policy Institute, and the Tribal Libraries Association

Qualifications:

- PhD in any field of the humanities or humanistic social sciences. Read more about eligible fields [here](#).
- Familiarity with both qualitative and quantitative analysis; position will not require sophisticated statistical methods, but will require collating basic demographic data.
- Ability to work independently within the parameters of a project; interest in thinking and writing about creative solutions to bridge the digital divide; commitment to elevating local voices.
- Excellent writing skills.
- An understanding of the history of attempts by the federal government to extract wealth from and assimilate Native people.

Preferred:

- Familiarity with pedagogy or curriculum development.

APPLICATIONS

- Information on the Leading Edge Fellowship Program: <https://www.acls.org/Competitions-and-Deadlines/Leading-Edge-Fellowships>
- All applications must be submitted through the ACLS Online Fellowship Application System (ofa.acls.org).
- Application deadline: 9:00pm EDT, March 15, 2023.

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