Webinar explores tribal broadband challenges and opportunities

by: Jeremy Hegle

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Nuts, Bolts, and Cables: Opportunities in Tribal Broadband, the third in a series of conversations on cultivating Native economies, will be held online October 16, 2023, from 2-3:30 p.m. Central time. It is hosted by the Minneapolis Fed’s Center for Indian Country Development (CICD) in partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City and the American Indian Policy Institute at Arizona State University.

Internet access connects communities to economic opportunity and vital services. Research from the CICD has found that tribal areas have inadequate access to high-speed Internet, known as broadband. Today, new funding and partnership possibilities are opening opportunities for tribes to improve their communities’ digital infrastructure. Seizing these opportunities requires accurate, comprehensive data on the state of broadband across Indian Country.

Join us October 16 for a conversation about the research on tribal broadband and opportunities for tribes to improve their communities’ Internet access. This is the third event in CICD’s 2023 webinar series: Cultivating Native Economies in the 21st Century. The series provides tribal leaders, policymakers, and practitioners with information they can use to strengthen and expand Indian Country economic prosperity.

The October 16 webinar will feature research on the tribal digital divide and information on modern broadband policies and programs. Tribal broadband practitioners and federal policymakers will discuss data challenges as well as opportunities for tribal governments to advance their service networks. Presenters and panelists will also explore the connection between tribes’ ability to make decisions about their digital infrastructure and tribal sovereignty. Participants will have the opportunity to share questions as part of a live question-and-answer session.
Jeremy Hegle
Assistant Vice President and Community Affairs Officer (CAO)

Jeremy Hegle is assistant vice president and Community Affairs Officer (CAO). In this role, Hegle leads the Tenth District’s Community Development department with responsibility for leading and executing the Bank’s districtwide community and economic development initiatives, which address challenging issues affecting lower-income individuals, underserved communities and small businesses’ access to credit. He also represents the Kansas City Fed on the Federal Reserve System’s CAO subcommittee and will manage the Bank’s Community Development Advisory Council. Prior to being named CAO in 2023, Hegle led the Bank’s digital equity efforts. In 2019 Hegle co-authored Disconnected: Seven lessons on fixing the digital divide, a layperson’s overview of the digital divide. He led efforts to narrow the digital divide using three strategies: Expanding access to affordable home broadband. Collaborating with state broadband directors, federal agencies, and local government on broadband deployment strategies and increased access through affordable internet programs. Increasing the supply of low-cost computers by encouraging employers to donate their used computers to nonprofit refurbishers, schools and community organizations. Informing banks, foundations, government and policymakers of the complex factors that cause the digital divide, the latest research on the topic, and creative solutions to fix it. Hegle joined the Kansas City Fed in 2015. Previously, he served in the Army National Guard and later helped launch KCSourceLink, a small-business support organization that links thousands of entrepreneurs with resources to start, grow and accelerate their businesses. Hegle has a bachelor’s in business administration and an M.B.A. from the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

About the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City
The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City is one of 12 regional Reserve Banks that, along with the Board of Governors in Washington, D.C., make up our nation’s central bank. We work in the public’s interest by supporting economic and financial stability. The Kansas City Fed’s territory includes Colorado, Kansas, western Missouri, Nebraska, northern New Mexico, Oklahoma and Wyoming. Our headquarters is in Kansas City, with branch offices in Denver, Omaha and Oklahoma City. The Kansas City Fed Community Development Department promotes economic development and public understanding that leads to progress for lower-income individuals and communities. Our focus areas include community development investments, digital inclusion, small business / entrepreneurism, and workforce development.