Tribal Ready and Connect Humanity Partner to Support Eight Tribal Communities in Appalachia to Secure Internet Access

Washington, D.C. – Today, Tribal Ready and Connect Humanity announce a new partnership to collaborate and support eight unserved/underserved Tribal communities across the geography served by the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) through the design and completion of Digital Equity Connectivity Plans and applications for federal funding to support broadband expansion, including Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) and Digital Equity Act (DEA) funds.

"Our new partnership with Connect Humanity will enable us to reach eight Tribal communities with information and support that will be critical to their success in securing funding for broadband," said Joe Valandra, CEO and President of Tribal Ready. "Tribal Ready looks forward to collaborating with Connect Humanity and other like-minded organizations to ensure Tribal Nations have a seat at the table."

This partnership is part of the Appalachian Digital Equity Accelerator Grants program, supported by the Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies (ARISE) program — a new ARC initiative that aims to drive large-scale, regional economic transformation through multi-state collaborative projects across Appalachia. Together, the organizations will conduct outreach to Tribal communities within ARC's service area to encourage and support them in their efforts to apply for the Appalachia Digital Equity Accelerator Grants program.

The program will support 50 communities across Appalachia to plan, fund, and build next-generation broadband networks, with participating communities receiving funding and technical assistance to do the community engagement, technical design, workforce development, and financial analysis needed to build an affordable, sustainable broadband network. Participants will also receive hands-on support to secure federal funding and other investment to make these networks a reality.

Tribal Ready will use its decades of experience in communication network design and local expertise to identify Tribal leaders and organizations in Appalachia and support them to apply for the program. Connect Humanity and Tribal Ready will then work together to host a webinar and educate leaders about the program and the importance of applying for funding to support their broadband expansion efforts.

"Connect Humanity is excited to partner with Tribal Ready and grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with a company committed to bridging the Tribal digital divide," said Samantha Schartman, Director of Philanthropic Programs at Connect Humanity. "Native communities remain some of the least digitally connected in the US. With Tribal Ready's support, this program will ensure Tribal communities in Appalachia have the information and resources they

need to shape a digital future on their terms. This builds on the work of the Indigenous Connectivity Institute — an initiative we're hosting to advance digital equity in tribal communities."

Tribal Ready joins other program partners in outreach to communities in Appalachia, including the [The Enterprise Center](#), [Fair Count](#), [Generation WV](#), Just Transition Fund, [Mississippi Alliance of Nonprofits & Philanthropy](#), North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission, SEDA Council of Governments, [SOAR – Shaping Our Appalachian Region,](#) and more.

To learn more about the program, visit: https://connecthumanity.fund/arise/

About Tribal Ready

Tribal Ready is a Native American-owned and governed company with decades of expertise in communication network design and delivery to high-cost rural areas. Our mission is to ensure high-speed broadband reaches every Native American individual and community. We are committed advocates for tribal sovereignty, fighting for the right to govern our communities and benefit from access to modern technology. Our team has the knowledge and relationships vital for tribes to access broadband grant funding and the trust necessary to preserve culture and advance tribal sovereignty.

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About Connect Humanity

Connect Humanity is a non-profit fund advancing digital equity by investing in community connectivity providers. It helps underserved communities identify the right solutions to meet their connectivity needs and provides funding and technical assistance so they can build the internet infrastructure, tools, and skills they need to participate fully in a digital society. Connect Humanity is also the host of the Indigenous Connectivity Institute (ICI) which works to advance internet connectivity in Indigenous communities in the United States and Canada, by cultivating knowledge, providing grants to Indigenous broadband networks, and convening a movement of Indigenous broadband advocates.