

Clearfield Launches Tribal Broadband Training Initiative to Empower Native Communities and Build the Skilled Fiber Workforce of Tomorrow

No-cost program provides FOA-accredited certification to create lasting careers and connectivity in Tribal communities

MINNEAPOLIS--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- [Clearfield, Inc.](#) (NASDAQ:CLFD), the leader in community broadband fiber connectivity, today announced the launch of its Tribal Broadband Training Initiative, a program developed with the support of industry leaders to expand fiber workforce training across Tribal lands. Designed to provide meaningful career paths in fiber optics to enrolled Tribal members, the initiative offers no-cost Certified Fiber Optic Technician (CFOT®) training to support Tribal Nations in building the skilled workforce needed to deploy and sustain high-speed broadband networks, creating long-term economic opportunities within their communities.

Clearfield's Tribal Broadband Training Initiative was born out of a workforce development session at Fiber Connect 2025, where the discussion focused on the need for accessible, skills-based training tailored to Tribal communities. Clearfield responded by launching the program.

"Training today's fiber workforce is critical to ensuring broadband expansion creates lasting, local impact," said Johnny Hill, Chief Operating Officer at Clearfield and a member of the Ojibwe Nation. "Our goal is to go beyond connecting homes — it's about connecting people to meaningful careers that strengthen their own communities for generations."

Clearfield's goal is to host one training session each quarter near Tribal lands across the U.S. The first session will take place January 13–15, 2026, at Clearfield's headquarters in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota. The second session is slated for April 7–9, 2026, at the Hopi Telecommunications office in Keams Canyon, Arizona. The third session is scheduled for July 21-23, 2026, at Tri County Tech in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

The three-day CFOT course, accredited by the Fiber Optic Association (FOA), blends classroom learning with hands-on training. Participants gain practical expertise across inside plant, outside plant, and access network applications, preparing them for real-world fiber deployment roles. Upon successful completion, participants earn an industry-recognized certification that boosts employability and opens doors to advanced specialization within the broadband industry.

According to Kelly Weissmann, Clearfield's Director of Technical Training and Support, the training offers more than technical knowledge—it builds a pathway to long-term success. "It's a career path that you will be able to invest your lifetime into—a career that can raise a

family and build a community,” Weissmann said.

The initiative also addresses a pressing national challenge: the need for skilled fiber technicians. According to a joint study by the Fiber Broadband Association (FBA) and the Power & Communication Contractors Association (PCCA), the U.S. broadband industry must add nearly 180,000 workers over the next decade to meet the demands of federally and state-funded broadband network construction. Without sufficient workforce development, the report warns that deployment bottlenecks could delay connectivity projects by two to three years. Clearfield’s Tribal Broadband Training Initiative helps fill this critical gap, ensuring these projects deliver sustainable, community-based employment.

“As more modern fiber networks are being built, these are certifications and jobs that are going to be here for a very long time,” said Tzeitel Buchanan, a member of the Cherokee Nation and Director of Public Sector Programs and Community Partnerships at Lumen Technologies, who offered industry insights that helped to inform the training initiative. “It is critical to fill these roles with technicians who understand the Tribal community, understand the customs and norms, and are able to help with that.”

Hill and Buchanan shared the vision and long-term goals of this initiative at the 2025 AISES National Conference in Minneapolis, which is the largest college and career fair for Indigenous professionals, high school students, and college students from the U.S. and Canada. “It’s not just about building networks,” Buchanan added. “It’s about building people and communities.”

This initiative underscores Clearfield's commitment to closing the skills gap, fostering digital literacy, and empowering individuals through education. By investing in workforce development at the local level, Clearfield is helping ensure that the benefits of broadband expansion reach everyone, including the communities historically left behind. To register for the Tribal Broadband Training Initiative or receive updates about future sessions, [visit here](#). Additional dates and locations will be added soon.

For more information on Clearfield and its innovative fiber solutions, visit www.SeeClearfield.com.

About Clearfield, Inc.

Clearfield, Inc. (NASDAQ: CLFD) designs, manufactures, and distributes fiber optic management, protection, and delivery solutions that play a critical role in enabling broadband operators to close the digital divide. Our labor lite, craft-friendly platform is leveraged by community broadband, MSOs, incumbent service providers, ISPs, data centers, military, municipalities, and coops - from homes passed to homes connected faster and more efficiently. Headquartered in Minneapolis, MN, Clearfield deploys more than a million fiber ports each year. For more information, visit www.SeeClearfield.com.

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