BroadbandUSA Newsletter

February 2021

Policy Corner: Broadband Grant Programs

By Doug Kinkoph, Associate Administrator
NTIA Office of Telecommunications and Information Applications

It has been a busy start to 2021 here at NTIA. NTIA's Institute for Telecommunication Sciences is laying the groundwork for a 5G Challenge with the Department of Defense, our Office of Spectrum Management published a spectrum repurposing report full of exciting progress, and the National Strategy to Secure 5G Implementation Plan has been released. NTIA is also hard at work putting into place the new broadband grant programs authorized by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021. These programs will help bring historically disconnected regions and communities online, with a particular emphasis on Tribal lands, minority communities and minority serving institutions. The BroadbandUSA March webinar with go into greater detail regarding these grant programs. As always, NTIA remains committed to the goal of connecting Americans to affordable and reliable broadband networks.

Consolidated Appropriations Act Webinar

BroadbandUSA's monthly webinar on Wednesday, March 17, 2021, at 3:00 pm will focus on the NTIA Grant Programs in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021. Participants will receive an overview of the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Grants, the Broadband Infrastructure Deployment Grants, and the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program. Please register to attend.

NTIA is continuing to analyze the obligations under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021. Please visit our website and make sure you are signed up for email updates from BroadbandUSA to learn more.

NTIA Events
February 12, 2020

Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program Tribal Consultations
Time: 1:00 PM Eastern
The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) is holding Tribal Consultations for input on implementation of the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP). The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 provides new sources of Tribal broadband funding that can assist in mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbating the digital divide across Indian Country. The Department of Commerce and NTIA are dedicated to expanding broadband deployment in unserved areas and promoting digital inclusion. Sign up here.

February 17, 2020

BroadbandUSA Practical Broadband Conversations Webinar Series
Topic: Data as the Foundation for Broadband Planning
Time: 2:00 PM Eastern
The federal government compiles huge broadband datasets cataloguing broadband availability and subscriptions through the US Census Bureau and Federal Communications Commission, among others. These can be augmented with commercially available speed test data to provide a better insight into broadband access and availability. Join BroadbandUSA on February 17, 2021, to gain a fuller understanding of these datasets and how to use data to strengthen your broadband planning efforts.

Speakers:

- Karen Perry, Senior Policy Analyst, BroadbandUSA, NTIA, U.S. Department of Commerce

- Bryan Darr, Vice President, Smart Communities, Ookla

- Lai Yi Ohlsen, Project Director, Measurement Lab

Visit our Webinar Archives for past presentations, transcripts and audio recordings.

Broadband News and Updates

Federal News

- **NTIA:** National Strategy to Secure 5G Implementation Plan
  - o NTIA Report on Spectrum Repurposing Finds Significant Progress
  - o NTIA, FDA Pilot Program to Curb Access to Illegal Opioids Online Delivers Promising Results
  - o NTIA's Institute for Telecommunication Sciences Issues Notice of Inquiry Exploring "5G Challenge" on Behalf of Department of Defense

- **FCC:** FCC Seeks Comment on Emergency Broadband Benefit Program
  - o FCC Takes Next Step to Collect More Precise Broadband Mapping Data
  - o FCC Annual Broadband Report Shows Digital Divide Is Rapidly Closing

- **USDA:** ReConnect continues to make award announcements

- **FirstNet:** FirstNet Powers the Future of Emergency Management
  - o The FirstNet Network Expands Across Arkansas to Advance Public Safety Communications Capabilities

State News

- **Arizona:** Governor Ducey Announces Funding for Broadband

- **Arkansas:** New State Broadband Map Provides Information, Helps with Policy

- **Connecticut:** Lamont Still Pressing for 5G Wireless Technology

- **Hawaii:** Hawaii Officials Push Broadband As Key To Post-Pandemic Economy

- **Idaho:** New Coalition, Imagine Idaho, Sets Goal of Improving Broadband throughout the State

- **Iowa:** Despite Glitch, Iowa Lawmakers Optimistic About Broadband Expansion

- **Minnesota:** How One Minnesota County Got on Track to Become Most Connected in State

- **Nebraska:** Nebraska Farm Bureau Cheers Ricketts' Plans For Tax Relief, Expansion Of Broadband

- **New York:** New York Governor Proposes Low-Income Internet Program

- **Pennsylvania:** State Government Invests In Snow Shoe Township's Broadband Expansion

- **Vermont:** COVID-19 Response Telecommunications Recovery Plan

- **Virginia:** Virginia Announces $29M Broadband Expansion

- **Wisconsin:** Evers Pitches $200 Million in Broadband Spending, Subsidies for Consumers

Digital Inclusion News

- Illinois to Launch Volunteer Program for Digital Literacy Training

- Technology Inequity in Educational Resources Impacts Lehigh Valley Students

- $300K Grant Kickstarts Research for Connecting More Michigan Students to Broadband Internet

- [Ottawa County Takes Action to Address Broadband Access and Affordability Concerns](#)
- [Workforce Connection Receives Grant to Purchase Chromebooks for People in Job Training](#)
- [Gov. Kay Ivey Extends Alabama Broadband Connectivity for Students Program](#)
- [Last Mile Enhancement Program Brings Tenfold Increase in Broadband Speed to 40 Ohio Colleges and Universities](#)
- [Cincinnati Bell: 124 Free Wi-Fi Hotspots Installed in Covington, City Moves Toward Digital Equity](#)
- [Proposals Submitted for Jaffrey Broadband Project](#)
- [Williamsburg Begins Distribution for Free Broadband Internet: Who Is Eligible, And Where To Find It](#)
- [St. Mary's County Broadband Assessment Project Results Released](#)
- [Broadband Initiative Could Make Bristol First Northern NH Tech Hub](#)

Local News

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General News

- [Pandemic Sheds Light on Rural Broadband Necessity](#)
- [State Capitols Brace for Cyberattacks, Too](#)

New BroadbandUSA Team Member

Michelle Cao
Intern

Michelle Cao joined the BroadbandUSA team as a graduate intern for the spring semester in January. Michelle is currently pursuing a Masters of Public Administration at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs in New York City, and is focused on information and telecommunications policy and data analysis. Originally from Los Angeles, she enjoys running and reading in her spare time.

NTIA's BroadbandUSA program promotes innovation and economic growth by supporting efforts to expand broadband connectivity and digital inclusion across America. In this role, BroadbandUSA serves state and local government, industry and non-profits that want to expand broadband infrastructure and promote digital inclusion.

Contact Us. If you are interested in receiving technical assistance, please email broadbandusa@ntia.gov or call 202-482-2048. For more information, visit our website at broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov.