Overview of Federal Funding

Introduction to Federal Funding Opportunities for Broadband

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Today's Presenters

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Presenters

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The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) advises on telecom policy issues

- NTIA is the Executive Branch agency in the U.S. Department of Commerce that is responsible for advising the President on domestic telecommunications and information policy issues.

- NTIA's programs and policies focus largely on:

  – expanding broadband access and adoption;

  – expanding the use of federal spectrum by all users, and

  – ensuring that the Internet remains an engine for continued innovation and economic growth.

NTIA's BroadbandUSA program educates communities, facilitates relationships and provides helpful resources

- *Arm stakeholders & community leaders with information* to make the right decisions

- *Convene & facilitate the right conversations* with the right people to increase project success

- *Develop guidance for communities* as they pursue solutions to broadband challenges

EDUCATOR

CONVENER

RESOURCES

This discussion focuses on key broadband-related funding opportunities across the federal government

Implementation   (e.g., Network Design, Network Construction Regulatory Approvals, Interconnection)

Planning   (e.g., RFP Development/Review, Preliminary Network Design, Asset Inventory)

62 percent of Technical Assistance (TA) requests received by BroadbandUSA involve topics related to funding

Overview of Federal Funding Opportunities

The Federal Communications Commission provides the vast majority of federal funding for broadband

- The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has several universal service programs that fund the deployment of broadband networks

- The FCC establishes the rules for the universal service programs; the programs are administered by the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC)

The FCC's Connect America Fund (Phase II) supports broadband deployment in high cost areas

Program Information	• Allocates nearly $2 billion over 10 years • Covers areas where price cap carriers refused subsidy support, and still remained unserved (i.e., lacking speeds of 10/1 Mbps downstream/upstream) • Involves 20 states and other locations facing extremely high costs
Funding Parameters	• FCC will hold a reverse auction • Bids are evaluated based on cost efficiency, and then adjusted for performance factors including speed, user capacity allowance, latency
Planning	• FCC will be soon seek comments on auction mechanics; auction date is not yet determined • Website: https://www.fcc.gov/general/connect-america-fund-caf

The FCC's Mobility Fund (Phase II) funding expands wireless mobile coverage across rural and tribal areas

Program Information
- Allocates $4.53 billion over the next decade; $340 million reserved for tribal areas.
- Targets census blocks lacking unsubsidized 4G LTE service with a minimum download speed of 5 Mbps

Funding Parameters
- Providers must offer mobile data speeds of at least 10/1 Mbps downstream/upstream with latency less than 100 milliseconds
- Pricing must be comparable to urban rates
- Participants will compete in a multi-round reverse auction; bid are evaluated based on cost efficiency

Planning
- The FCC plans to soon release a list of eligible areas (based on Form 477 data); auction date is not yet determined
- Website: https://www.fcc.gov/mobility-fund-phase-2

The FCC's E-Rate program provides funding to eligible schools and libraries to support Internet service options

Program Information	• Capped at an annual funding amount of approximately $3.9 billion • Subsides amount to 20 – 90 percent of eligible costs • Eligible broadband-related costs include Internet access, wide-area networks, and WI-Fi deployment
Funding Parameters	• K-12 schools, libraries and consortia of those entities are eligible • Schools may construct their own networks or purchase dark fiber when most cost-effective (*e.g.*, lowest total cost of ownerships); • A competitive procurement process is generally required • E-rate Modernization Order streamlined the application process
Planning	• Applications are due by **May 11, 2017** and cover the funding window from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018. • Website: http://www.usac.org/sl/tools/apply-to-erate/default.aspx

The FCC's Healthcare Connect Fund provides support for broadband connectivity to health care providers

Program Information	• Annual funding is capped at $400 million; beneficiaries receive discounts of up to 65% of eligible expenses • Eligible expenses include costs for broadband services, installation charges, and equipment
Funding Rules	• Eligible entities include health care providers and consortia of providers based in rural areas; consortia can include non-rural partners so long as the majority of members are rural-based • Funding can be used to construct networks or purchase dark fiber IRU's (for consortia applications only) • Applicants must solicit bids through a transparent competitive procurement process
Planning	• Application window runs through **June 30, 2017** • Website: http://www.usac.org/rhc/healthcare-connect/

USDA has dedicated support mechanisms for rural communities

- The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Development unit has two opportunities that can be used for broadband deployment

- Relevant grant programs:
  – Connect Community Grants
  – Rural Broadband Access Loan and Guarantee Program (Farm Bill)

USDA's Connect Community Grants finance broadband infrastructure in unserved, lower income and rural areas

Program Information	• Grant awards range from $100,000 to $3 million • Covers areas that are underserved by at least 4 Mbps download and 1 Mbps upload • Funding areas are prescribed by RUS rules
Funding Rules	• The program requires matching funds of at least 15 percent from non-federal sources • Recipients must provide a Community Center with at least two Computer Access Points and wireless access at the speed defined in the grant award free of all charges to users for at least 2 years
Resources	• The application deadline is **March 13, 2017** • Website: https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-connect-grants

USDA's Farm Bill funds construction and improvement of broadband facilities and equipment in rural areas

Program Information	• Loans range from $100,000 to $10 million • Covers areas with minimum 10 Mbps download and 1 Mbps upload for both mobile and fixed service • Funding areas are prescribed by RUS rules
Funding Rules	• Applicants must demonstrate a minimum equity contribution of 10 percent of the requested loan • Recipients must provide minimum 10 Mbps download and 1 Mbps upload for mobile service and 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload for fixed service
Resources	• First window is March 1- 31, 2017; Second is September 1-30, 2017 • Website: https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/farm-bill-broadband-loans-loan-guarantees

Several federal agencies have resources that can be used for broadband planning and research initiatives

- Even though broadband is not the focus of these programs, communities can still use funds from the programs below for broadband activities

• HUD's Community Development Block Program (CDBP) can be used for broadband deployment efforts in HUD supported housing	• EDA's Economic Adjustment Assistance Program and Public Works Program can be used for broadband planning efforts as part of a larger	• NSF has directed funding to support research related to advanced wireless telecommunications technologies
Housing and Urban Development	**Economic Development Administration**	**National Science Foundation**

HUD's Community Development Block (CDBG) Program provides funds for broadband connectivity

Program Information	• Provides annual grants to 1,209 general units of local government and states on a formula basis • Broadband infrastructure may be eligible as a public facility or improvement, as a private utility or as a public service
Funding Rules	• During a period of up to 3 years, at least 70 percent of funds must benefit low- and moderate-income persons • Grantees must develop a plan to encourage low- and moderate-income persons to participate
Resources	• Website: https://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/comm_planning/communitydevelopment/programs

EDA's Economic Adjustment Assistance Program facilitates broadband efforts through planning assistance

Program Information	• Funds range from $100,000 to $3 million • EDA's Economic Adjustment Assistance Program provides Strategy Grants to support the development, updating or refinement of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
Funding Rules	• Matching requirement is required, but the amount is not yet determined • Proposals and applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis until the publication of a new Federal Funding Opportunity
Resources	• Website: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=290874

NSF's Platforms for Advanced Wireless Research (PAWR) program funds advanced wireless research

Program Information	• Allocates $50 million of NSF funds over 5 years (to be equally matched by private investment) • Funds city-scale testing platforms to advance research on wireless devices and networks – thereby fostering innovation across the wireless ecosystem and emerging services (e.g., IoT)
Funding Parameters	• Universities and Colleges, non-profits, independent museums, observatories, research labs and professional societies are eligible • No more than one proposal per organization
Planning	• Preliminary proposals must be submitted via the NSF FastLane system; application deadline is not yet determined • Website: https://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?pims_id=505316

Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)

Program Information	• ARC is a regional economic development agency composed of the governors of the 13 Appalachian states and a federal co-chair • Award broadband grants for various purposes – e.g., fiber runs to industrial parks, muni Wi-Fi for commercial districts, wireless networks in unserved areas, tele-health and distance learning networks, feasibility studies
Funding Parameters	• ARC grants are available to public sector entities and non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations within the Appalachian Region • Grant applications must be recommended for approval by the state ARC office
Planning	• Contact designated Local Development District & state ARC office • Toolkit: www.arc.gov/images/programs/telecom/ARCBroadbandPlanningPrimerToolkit.pdf

Considerations for Pursuing Federal Funding Opportunities

Before applying for funding, applicants should establish a strategy, examine multiple programs and develop a budget

Establish Goals & Strategy	Develop broadband goals and strategy – *e.g.*, service gaps, technology, targeted communities, measurable outcomes, organization qualifications, partners, etc.
Think Critically	Consider how strategy meets the criteria of these programs; you may qualify for multiple funding opportunities
Quantify Finance Drivers	Quantify key drivers to your business model to evaluate funding needs – *e.g.*, addressable market, target customer segments, adoption rates, revenue per user, deployment and recurring costs, match sources

Organizations may be ineligible for federal funding if they fail to avoid some common mistakes

Application Does Not Meet Specifications

The funder specifications for funding requests are overlooked: purpose, scope, page length, word count, deadlines, etc.

Not Aligned With Program Interests

Conveyed programmatic mission and objectives are incompatible with the funding opportunity

Objectives Not Measurable

Without measurable program goals, evaluation of funding impact is much more difficult

Organizations may be ineligible for federal funding if they fail to avoid some common mistakes (continued)

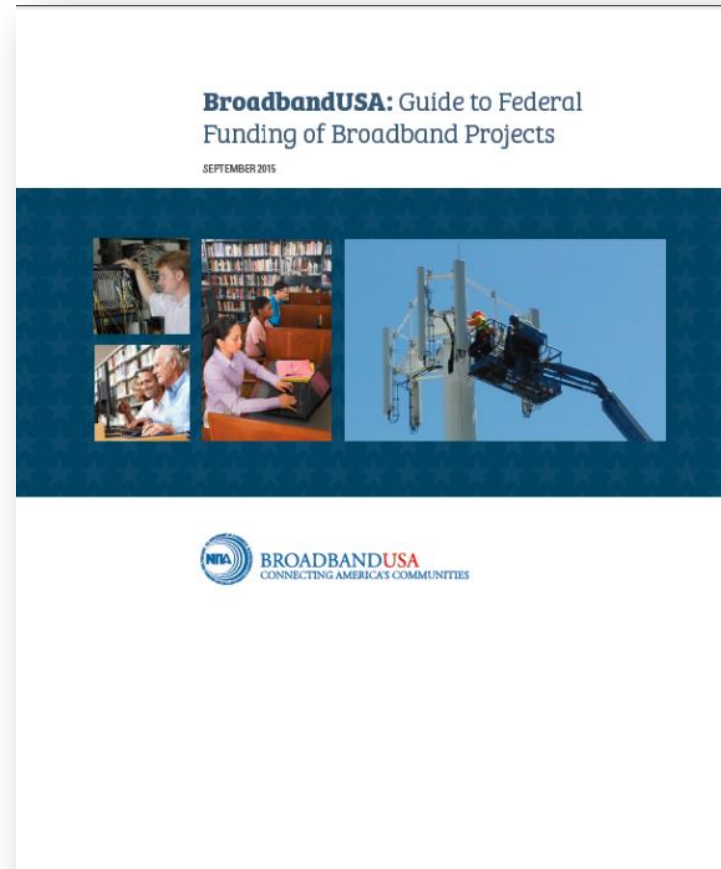|	
Budget Does Not Match Funding Request	Submission request below or beyond budget with no insight on how funding gaps will be closed
Program Impact Not Articulated	Community outcomes, as a result of funding should be clearly conveyed
Staff Responsibilities Not Detailed	Not indicating key staff (leadership) roles in program implementation indicates a lack of planning

Additional Resources

NTIA's Federal Funding Guide advises communities on accessing federal funding for broadband planning

The publication provides a list of key federal programs that offer funding for broadband-related projects and includes:

- Information regarding the purpose of each program

- Potential restrictions on funding

- Rules for eligibility

- https://www2.ntia.doc.gov/files/broadband_fed_funding_guide.pdf

BroadbandUSA is available to help communities with their broadband access and digital inclusion efforts

BBUSA Resources:

- [Public-Private Partnerships Guide](#)
- [Community Broadband Roadmap Toolkit](#)
- [Introduction to Stakeholder Outreach](#)
- [Using Partnerships to Power Smart Cities](#)

For General Information:

📞 202-482-2048

✉️ broadbandusa@ntia.doc.gov

🖥️ http://www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandusa

To Request Technical Assistance:

📝 Submit Intake Form

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Questions and Comments

- Please type your questions in the chat or Q&A box.

- Slides and Transcript will be posted on the BroadbandUSA website within 7 days after the webinar.

http://www2.ntia.doc.gov/

Broadband USA

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Strategies for Broadband Adoption and Digital Inclusion in Rural Communities

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