Connecting Minority Community Pilot Program
Notice of Funding Opportunity

Moderator: Francine Akisswani
August 19, 2021

1:23
Hello, and thank you for joining us today.

1:26
Due to the format of our webinar, we regret that dial-in audio is not available for this webinar.

1:32
If you would like to listen to this webinar on their mobile device, you must download the GoToWebinar app for Android or Apple.

1:40
If you are not able to download the app, rest assured this webinar will be available for on demand viewing at Broadbandusa.gov/past-events no later than August 25th. Thank you.

2:09 - **Francine Alkisswani**
Hello everyone.

2:10
My name is Francine Alkisswani and I am a member of the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program team and I will serve as your moderator today. So, on behalf of the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program team, again, I bring you greetings, and I welcome you to today's webinar.

2:30
We've made it to this significant milestone in the project and are especially pleased to be able to provide this Notice of Funding Opportunity [NOFO] Webinar.

2:42
We aim in this webinar to familiarize you with the NOFO and provide you an opportunity to ask questions.

2:51
You will have an opportunity to have a Q&A session with us. So, we want you to type your questions in the Q &A box on the right-hand side of the screen.

3:02
Question and answers will be available on the FAQ section of our website.

3:08
You'll also find on the website an overview of the *Consolidated Appropriations Act [of] 2021*, and that's at [BroadbandUSA.ntia.doc.gov].

3:20
So this presentation, along with a transcript and recording, will be available on that website under events/past events on or before August 25th, 2021.

3:33

I'd like to mention also that all prior webinars, as well as the transcripts, are available to you for your review on BroadbandUSA under past events. Now, for our program today – it's very tight. We want to make sure we get all information to you that is available.

3:57

As I said, we aim for this webinar to familiarize you with the NOFO and to provide you an opportunity to ask us questions.

4:05

However, we are joined today by the Honorable Gina M. Raimondo who is the 40th US Secretary of Commerce. And we'll also have presentations by the full Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program team.

4:26

So, we'll have as our presenters: Kevin Hughes; Scott Woods, who's our Program Team Lead; Emy Tseng; Michell Morton; Karen Archer Perry; Pandora Beasley-Timpson; Janice Wilkins; and we're also fortunate to have our colleagues and partners from the NIST Grants office joining us.

4:48

So, now that you have a sense of who the team is, let's take a look at the agenda for today.

4:56

We will have greetings and a special address brought to you by the Honorable Gina M. Raimondo, 40th US Secretary of Commerce.

5:08

We will have a program overview [by] Kevin Hughes. Our team lead, Scott Woods, will bring an overview of the NOFO, the Notice of Funding Opportunity. And my colleagues Emy Tseng and Michelle Morton will provide some program examples for you.

5:26

The NIST Grants office will give a presentation and overview of the application submission process. You'll want to pay close attention there.

5:36

And next, we will have a review of the processes of the application and next steps, followed by your questions and answers.

5:48

I'd now like to turn this over to Scott Woods, our team lead for the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program, to introduce to you the Honorable Gina M. Raimondo. Scott, please.

6:06 – Scott Woods

Good afternoon, and good morning, everyone. It is my pleasure to introduce the Honorable Gina M. Raimondo, the 40th US Secretary of Commerce, who will provide opening remarks and a special address for those in attendance today. Secretary Raimondo has also made history herself as the 75th and first female governor of the State of Rhode Island. And again, now she serves as the US Secretary of Commerce, so please welcome the Honorable Gina M. Raimondo.

6:42 - The Honorable Gina Raimondo

Hello, everyone. It's great to be with you today.

6:45

Welcome to NTIA's latest webinar on the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program. NTIA published the Notice of Funding Opportunity on August 3rd and we're excited to accept applications.

7:00

The CMC Pilot program comes at a critical time for our country. For far too long, minority communities across America haven't had access to high-speed broadband. When COVID-19 began schools across America quickly switched to online education, but too many children weren't able to have that education because they lacked access to broadband.

7:25

I met with leaders from Navajo Nation and heard the heartbreaking stories of children who had paper lessons delivered to them on a bus. We also heard stories of families who would have to drive to restaurant parking lots so their kids could do virtual schooling. I know that many of you can relate to this, and unfortunately, we know the impact isn't just on schooling. Communities that lack reliable broadband also have fewer economic opportunities, slower government services, delays in public services, and higher medical costs.

8:01

The Connecting Minority Communities Program recognizes that historically black, Tribal, and minority serving colleges are vital centers of learning and job creation. This program builds on NTIA's Minority Broadband Initiative.

8:18

The CMC program will provide $268 million to help these institutions purchase broadband service or equipment, hire IT personnel, or create digital literacy programs. These investments will deliver immediate benefits to your campus's students and communities.

8:37

I know that Scott Woods and Francine Alkisswani and the CMC Program team have been engaging with many of you already on this program. NTIA will continue conducting stakeholder outreach and providing technical assistance, so please don't hesitate to reach out and make sure to get your applications in by December 1st.

9:02

Thank you for joining today. I look forward to our continued collaboration and a successful program.

9:10 - **Francine Alkisswani**

Thank you so much, Secretary Raimondo. We are honored to have had your presentation and presence and greetings to our group today. I'd now like to introduce you to Kevin Hughes, broadband program specialist, to bring you an overview of the CMC Pilot Program. Kevin, please.

9:38 – **Kevin Hughes**

Thank you, Francine. And I'm Kevin Hughes, a broadband program specialist here at NTIA, and a member of the CMC team. And it's my pleasure to give a brief overview of the CMC Pilot Program grant.

9:55

Through the CMC Pilot Program grant, NTIA will directly address the lack of broadband access, connectivity, adoption, and equity at our nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities, or HBCUs; Tribal Colleges and Universities, [or] TCUs; and Minority Serving institutions, [or] MSIs and their surrounding anchor community.

10:21
Congress has directed NTIA to provide these institutions with the ability to facilitate educational instruction and learning, including through remote instruction, which is very important, especially during these times of COVID.

10:36
And to consortia, including minority business enterprises, or MBEs, or tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations to operate that MBE or 501(c)(3).

10:50
So what can eligible recipients use grant funding for? Well, they can purchase broadband Internet access service, including the installation or upgrade of broadband facilities on a one-time capital improvement basis to increase or expand broadband capacity and/or connectivity at the eligible institution. They can purchase or lease eligible equipment and devices for student or patron use. And lastly, they can hire and train IT personnel who are a part of the eligible anchor institution, the MBE, or tax-exempt 501(c)(3).

11:31
When we talked about the federal award, NTIA expects to make awards under this program within the following funding range: $500,000 to $3 million. And that range is not a required minimum or maximum. I repeat, that range is not a required minimum or maximum.

11:54
Congress has appropriated up to $268 million in total grant funding for the CMC grant, and there's a two-year period of performance. If necessary, eligible recipients may submit a request for an extension with its application.

12:12
And you can contact the CMC team for greater details on that issue. Program goals – what are the CMC Program grant goals?

12:26
Well, the pilot program is focused on building the broadband digital capacities of HBCUs, TCUs, and MSI educational institutions, and the surrounding communities to expand educational instruction and remote learning opportunity, hire technology personnel, and to spur economic development, employment, and entrepreneurship.

12:50
And the purpose for all of that is to build the broadband into digital technology capacities of eligible institutions and support broadband access, adoption, and digital skills within those institutions and their surrounding community.

13:08
There is no match required for the CMC grant and there are program evaluation and data collection requirements, of course, for all applicants and applications. When Congress appropriated the funding for the CMC grant, they included requirements and statutory-mandated set asides.

13:34
So at least 40% of grant funds awarded must be made to HBCUs, and at least 20% of all grant funds awarded must be used to provide broadband access and/or devices and equipment to students. These statutory set asides are not mutually exclusive. For example, if an HBCU wanted to provide broadband Internet access and/or eligible equipment to its students, this would be covered toward both set aside

requirements, okay? When we talk about the program's focus, the program's focus is really geared towards students in need.

14:20
Therefore, the provision of broadband Internet access service or eligible equipment to students must prioritize students who are in need per the needs criteria factors in the NOFO. And the provision or lending of equipment must prioritize students and/or patrons who do not have access to such equipment.

14:44
As we see here on this slide, this is the CMC Anchor Community Eligibility Dashboard, and we discussed the dashboard on previous webinars. And here we included it just as a reminder of what a great tool this is for interested applicants to view.

15:06
You can visit the link there at the bottom of the slide, and you would be able to see the eligible communities. So in a 15-mile radius surrounding each eligible institution and basically communities that the institution can help partner with and support utilizing funds from the CMC grant.

15:33
When we talk about the CMC Dashboard, we do have a few updates, and they are listed here on this slide. But the key point that I wanted to share with you is that the CMC Dashboard is in the process of being updated to reflect the Department of Education's 2021 Eligibility Matrix or MSI-designated status.

15:58
There are additions and deletions with the new update and the CMC team is currently validating the data. The other updates that you see here on the slide have all been completed, and you can view those at your leisure.

16:16
Well, that concludes my section, and now we will turn it over to our senior broadband program specialist Mr. Scott Woods, who will be talking to you about the notice of Funding Opportunity. Over to you, Scott.

16:36 – **Scott Woods**
Thank you, Kevin, for providing us with an overview of the CMC Pilot Program, and good afternoon, or good morning everyone, depending on where you are.

16:44
My name is Scott Woods and it's my pleasure to be with you today to discuss and provide an overview of the CMC Notice of Funding Opportunity, or the NOFO. So first, let's begin by going over some key information. As you all are aware, the NOFO was released on grants.gov on August 3rd, and it is currently available for access. Again, you have to go on grants.gov to view it. Complete applications must be received no later than 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time on December 1, 2021.

17:23
Again, I want to emphasize complete application, so it's not enough just to submit it. It has to be a complete application for consideration for the CMC Pilot Program by this deadline. So, again, who can apply? And Kevin did a good job of going over that, but I want to focus on just the MSIs, because in our outreach, there was some concern about not really knowing all the various subtypes of MSIs for the program.

17:55
So, the MSI institutions include: Hispanic Serving Institutions [HSI]; Native American serving Non-Tribal Institutions; Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions; Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions [AANAPISI]; and predominantly Black institutions. And again, these are delineated by the Department of Education.

18:23
There are some institutions that have several MSI categorizations, so they may be categorized as both an HSI and an AANAPISI school. The schools know this, but again for those of you who are seeing this for the first time, these are the various subcategories of MSIs for the CMC Pilot Program.

18:48
You all know about Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal colleges or Tribal universities, and then consortiums that include minority business enterprise, or a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations. And again, I want to emphasize tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations. There are some organizations that are not-for-profit designated 501(c)(3) by the IRS.

19:13
The tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization is another category or specialization as determined by the IRS. So again, make sure that for those consortium applications, it's a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization.

19:32
So let's talk about what you are here for, which is to find out about the specific purposes and activities that are allowable under the CMC pilot program. So your application for requests or requests for funding must have at least one of the following purposes in the application: so, one, it has to build the broadband and IT capacity of the eligible institution.

20:00
Right? So building that broadband infrastructure, building the capacity, building the bandwidth of those eligible schools. Two – building the digital skills and IT workforce capacity with HBCUs, TCUs, and MSIs, the surrounding anchor communities, and again, in a consortium application, with the minority business enterprise, or the tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization.

20:29
But you can also provide broadband education, awareness, training, access, equipment, and the support necessary for those programs, or you can also provide subsidized broadband access and the equipment required.

20:46
For the planning standpoint, you can assess the needs of the schools or the institutions, and the surrounding communities, including planning activities. So, what does that mean?

20:57
So [for] a lot of you, this might be the first time that you are engaged in a digital inclusion [project] or improving of the broadband capacity of your institution, and that requires some type of assessment or planning to figure out exactly what's needed.

21:15
We specifically in the CMC Pilot Program, will cover those costs – will cover that activity necessary to conduct an assessment to conduct that plan, including strategic planning, as we move forward with the programmatic activities.

21:33
Six – you can also improve the use of broadband services by eligible consortium members, so the minority business enterprise, and those tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organizations, and then generally stimulates those programs that stimulate the adoption and community use of broadband services.

21:55
Getting into more specific use of funds, an eligible recipient may generally use CMC grant funds to fund personnel costs, including salaries and fringe benefits for both staff and consultants.

22:09
You can also fund increases, again, and broadband networking capability, including the hardware, software, and other digital technology and platforms. You can fund equipment and devices, but not mobile phones, to support connectivity for remote education, both for the students and in the community. You can also fund, provide, and implement affordable broadband programs, and we'll have examples of those coming up in the next few slides.

22:40
You can also fund, provide, and implement digital training classes, education classes, technology support, outreach, and awareness programs. And finally down here, you can also fund access to broadband services, including the improvement of broadband services and equipment. This generally means some type of contractual service with the service provider to provide broadband service for the community or for the students or the devices. So again, we will provide specific examples of activities here coming up in the next few slides.

23:16
So you may also generally use grant funds to conduct needs assessments and develop plans for increasing broadband adoption and access to remote education. We understand that [for] many of you, this may be the first time that you're doing this type of programming, or activity, both with your students and in the community. And so we will cover those costs to perform those planning activities and assessments to see exactly what's needed and how best to develop a plan of action to address the needs in those communities.

23:52
You may also fund evaluation and data collection activities to specifically collect data and document best practices to ensure this program can be replicable and sustainable across the portfolio.

24:05
We'll have more information on this activity as we move forward with our subsequent webinars and our outreach to potential applicants.

24:16
You can also fund subawards and contractual costs associated with carrying out the programmatic activities of the CMC, including program implementation and consulting services. We understand in the execution of some of these projects, we will partner with the private sector, philanthropic organizations, not-for-profit organizations. Again, we understand that you can subaward, right? You can award [and] contract CMC funds to those organizations to carry out the programmatic activities, the goals, and [the] objectives of your program. We'll have more information on that as we move forward.

25:00
From the pre-application standpoint, you can fund reasonable pre-application expenses and the amount not to exceed $50,000. Again, anything over $50,000, [and] you're going to have to bear that expense or

that cost. But we will allow you to fund pre-application expenses to prepare the application – maybe to hire a grant writer or a consultant to help you put your application together – again, in an amount not to exceed $50,000 for that portion to be covered by CMC funds. You can fund any other allowable costs that are necessary to carry out the programmatic activities. And again, we will have subsequent webinars with the grants office to talk about the allowable costs, what those look like, and how you have to document those.

25:51
Then finally, you can gather data, conduct evaluation of your digital inclusion programming, the broadband access and adoption programs, and your professional development and training program. So again, we're building in data collection and evaluation as a priority in this program, as we have specific reporting obligations to Congress. But overall, we want to document the successes of all of these programs. And so, we are going to ensure that you can cover the cost to ensure [that] proper data collection and evaluation can be conducted in [these] programs.

26:29
So in our outreach, many of you, particularly the institutions of higher education, talked about indirect costs. And so there is a provision in the NOFO – section four, paragraph B.8. of the NOFO talks specifically about indirect costs. So if you have an indirect cost agreement, a negotiated indirect cost agreement, or cost rate with a cognizant federal agency, you can include that.

26:58
You have to document it in the budget. You have to attach it in your application, and we will recognize your ability to claim those indirect costs. The Department of Commerce has the financial assistance standard terms and conditions of Section B.06 talks about how we treat indirect costs. So again, I would bring your attention to that document in addition to the section here in the NOFO, and then we also plan in conjunction with the grants office to provide more information on the treatment of indirect costs.

27:35
Now if you do not have an indirect cost agreement that has been negotiated with a cognizant federal agency, you can still elect to take the de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs. And again, that's contained in the NOFO. Either way, you have to elect this as part of your budget portion of the application and those costs. If any of you need any more information on indirect costs, please don't hesitate to reach out to the program team and/or the grants office. And we'll make sure we discuss this with you, and so you understand exactly what you do [and] what you have in terms of your indirect cost agreements.

28:19
We understand as institutions of higher education, many of you may have research grants with other federal agencies and may have already negotiated indirect cost agreements, rate agreements already in your possession. So again, let's make sure that we understand and talk through how you're going to attribute those to the CMC Pilot Program.

28:45
So next, we're going to talk about ineligible costs. Now these costs are specifically prohibited by the CMC Pilot Program. [I'm] not going to go through all of these, I just want to highlight a couple. The first three really deal with – or two of the three deal with the particular prohibited uses of equipment. And so we'll document that in the NOFO. It will be documented also in the citations in the NOFO, and those will be clear.

29:12

I want to highlight here specifically about construction activities. So when we're referencing construction activities, we're generally talking about ground disturbance activities that require NEPA or SHPO some other external approval that's not allowed under this program.

29:30

We do understand though in some instances, in some proposals, you may want to wire a particular building. We don't consider that construction. You may want to maybe add a tower on top of the building or wireless access points. We don't consider that construction. We're generally talking about those ground disturbance activities.

29:52

Facilities-based construction planning to extend broadband facilities or a segment of a fiber or cable connectivity outside of the campus walls to the campus. Again, that would be prohibited.

30:08

Again, we talked about the pre-award cost greater than $50,000. You can't use CMC funds as loan repayment to repay any of your external obligations or to provide for loan collateral. [That's] very important – any previously incurred cost prior to the CMC Pilot Program [is] specifically prohibited.

30:33

We talked about previously the duplication of funding for other federal programs for similar purposes, primarily from the Department of Education, perhaps the National Science Foundation, as well as the Federal Communications Commission. We'll have more information for you on that as we move forward here with our outreach. And then finally, as you heard from the grants office, no costs that are generally unallowable under the applicable federal cost principles. And again, the grants office will have more information on that.

31:06

So I know that's a lot of information, but I wanted to highlight those permissible activities that we are allowed under the CMC Pilot Program. And now for specific examples, I'm going to turn it over to team members Emy Tseng and Michell Morton, who will provide additional detail on the permissible activities that could be conducted under the CMC Pilot Program. So again, it's my pleasure to be here with you and I will turn it over to Emy and Michell. Thank you.

31:41- **Emy Tseng**

Thank You, Scott. Hello, everyone, I'm Emy Tseng, and next, my colleague Michell Morton and I will discuss examples on how eligible entities might use grant funding to support programs within their institutions and in surrounding anchor communities. Just as a reminder, eligible entities include HBCUs, TCUs, MSIs (Minority Serving Institutions), and consortia led by eligible educational institutions with MBEs and non-profit, tax-exempt organizations. Note that these examples are actually grounded in real life examples that we have heard about. However, they're not meant to be exclusive. I'm hoping that they give you ideas about the types of projects that you may want to undertake with CMC funding.

32:36

So, an eligible educational institution may choose to use funding to build out its own broadband and IT capacity. For example, an HBCU might choose to upgrade the Wi-Fi within their own dormitories.

32:52

A university may also use funding to deploy a new online course and learning management system to better enable students to register for courses, access their courses online, view their grades, and

communicate with their advisors and faculty. Note that eligible funding includes the IT personnel and staff, as well as training needed to deploy and support these systems.

33:20
An educational institution may also use funding to ensure that their low-income and in-needs students can access and benefit from remote instruction and learning. For example, a community college may implement a laptop and Wi-Fi hotspot lending program for their students and faculty members. They may also choose [to] conduct outreach and help students subscribe to existing discount broadband programs.

33:50
An educational institution might also use funding to hire and train technology personnel, and to more broadly leverage your unique role in developing a more diverse and inclusive technology workforce. The funding can support all ranges of digital skills training, from basic to advanced skills, like STEM, coding, cybersecurity, etc. This training can be in a class, or it could be in partnership with businesses to implement work-based learning, apprenticeships, and internships. For example, a Tribal college might partner with a Tribal broadband provider on a fiber technician training program to provide local expertise and support of their own broadband network.

34:41
Next, we will hear from Michell Morton, who will provide examples about possible programs within anchor communities.

34:53 – **Michelle Morton**
Thank you, Emy. Hello everyone, I'm Michell Morton, and the next three slides will discuss using grant funding to support programs and anchor communities. These eligible entities include HBCUs, MSIs, TCUs, and consortia led by eligible educational institutions with MBEs or 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations.

35:16
Eligible entities may use funding to support the promotion of broadband access, adoption, and digital inclusion with anchor communities.

35:25
Some funded activities include tech support and IT services to residents, businesses, and community organizations.

35:34
Funding can also support digital skills; training for residents, businesses, and community organizations; as well as fund broadband awareness, adoption, and training programs, including digital connectors and navigators.

35:48
An example is an eligible entity forming a consortium with a non-profit to use the grant award to fund a health IT project.

35:56
An example is an eligible entity forming a consortium with a non-profit to use the grant award to fund a health IT project. The project could focus on decreasing health disparities in underserved communities through digital skills training and encouraging broadband adoption.

36:04
In developing digital skills, community members can learn how to manage chronic diseases, such as diabetes, asthma, or heart disease, using online platforms and tools, as well as to conduct telehealth appointments with healthcare providers.

36:19
Funding could also be used to support digital navigators as trainers in these communities.

36:25
Eligible entities may also use funding to support broadband and information technology-related operations of an MBE or 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization within designated anchor communities.

36:39
A grant award can be used to purchase broadband equipment [and] devices; technology support and IT services; purchase broadband Internet services; fund IT staff and personnel costs; as well as IT related professional development.

36:53
For example, an eligible entity can fund an MBE to support small business development and entrepreneurship for underserved residents like women or people of color.

37:03
Consortium could use the funding to provide technology skills training, devices, software, and Internet access to small business owners that represent underrepresented populations; training to focus on helping business owners learn how to use and develop online marketing tools and platforms; [and] for website development, we'll provide accounting software to improve their digital services.

37:26
Last, funding may be used to promote inclusive innovation, workforce and economic development, and entrepreneurship within designated anchor communities. Funds may be used to provide advanced digital skills training, including STEM or STEAM programs, coding, cybersecurity, networking, and smart technology.

37:47
Funds may also be used for IT-related business support, workforce and economic development centers, and business incubators. A grant award can also fund IT apprenticeship and internship programs.

38:00
The first example is of a rural community college that, in partnership with a non-profit, provides career employment training to underserved residents. The program offers apprenticeships and internships to enrolled students, as well as provides credits to participants.

38:17
The second example of an urban educational institution that can use funds to build a business incubator space and partner with an MBE to offer STEM or STEAM classes to youth from underserved communities. – an underrepresented group in the tech field.

38:34
These classes could introduce students to startup culture and small business development, such as design thinking principle, app development, and pitch competition.

38:45
Next, you will hear from Mercedes Martinez, a NIST grants officer who will provide more information about the application submission process via grants.gov.

38:59 – Mercedes Martinez

Thank you, Michelle. I am Mercedes Martinez, a grants officer at NIST, and partnering with the CMC Program team. Today, I'll dive into the application submission process described in Section 4 of the NOFO. We'll walk through these sections of the NOFO and elaborate on some of the application elements, such as the SF-424A and the budget narrative. Finally, I'll share a table of resources available to you as you prepare an application for this program.

39:29
I want to re-iterate that complete applications for the CMC Pilot Program must be electronically submitted through grants.gov.

39:39
There are two phases to successfully apply in grants.gov.

39:43
First, ensure you're registered through grants.gov. Organizations must have a DUNS number and an active SAM registration. A federal assistance award cannot be issued if the designated recipient's registration in SAM.gov is not current at the time of the award. DUNS and SAM registrations may take several weeks. For SAM, the free annual registration process on SAM.gov generally takes between 3 and 5 business days, but can take more than three weeks. An organization's registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact the entity's ability to meet required application submission deadlines. Create a grants.gov profile account and add a profile. This profile is essentially the applicant organization you as a user represent.

40:33
You will need the organization's DUNS number to add the organizational profile to your user account. The e-business [Ebiz] point of contact will assign and authorize the appropriate roles to grants.gov user accounts associated with its organization. The Ebiz POC will authorize the AOR role.

40:55
This role will be able to submit your organization's application. You can track your role assignment's status in grants.gov, and I recommend you identify the Ebiz POC at your organization.

41:08
Next, to apply in grants.gov, you'll need to create a Workspace or be part of a Workspace. This is the environment that allows members to work simultaneously within an application.

41:19
This will also allow you to route the application through your organization for review before submitting. You will complete the Workspace and submit through grants.gov. Grants.gov recommends you submit your application at least 24 to 48 hours prior to the close date. You can track the Workspace submission with the tracking number automatically assigned to the application. A helpful tip about the electronic signature for you - when the application package is submitted through grants.gov, the name of the organization applicant with the AOR role that submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application serving as the electronic signature.

42:03
The Ebiz POC must authorize the individuals who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization as a user with the AOR role. Grants.gov offers 24/7 support by phone and email. Please contact them if you have any questions about any of this process.

42:25
Listed are the application components, standard forms, and additional requirements that will comprise your application. These are covered in detail in Section 4B, *Content and Form of Applications*, of the NOFO.

42:38
Standard forms include the SF-424, the SF-424A budget form, the SF-424B assurances for non-construction programs. This form is required for applicants that have not updated their sam.gov entity registration since February 2, 2019.

42:57
The SAM entity registration now includes the Federal Financial Assistance Certification and Representations, or Certs and Reps. The final Standard forms are the CD-511, certification regarding lobbying, and the Standard form LLL, or disclosure of lobbying activities, if applicable.

43:18
Additional requirements that will be attached to your application include the project narrative, the detailed project budget and budget narrative, [and] the indirect cost rate (as applicable). Letters of commitment are required for consortium applicant applications.

43:35
The certification regarding compliance is located in Appendix A of the NOFO and is required for all applicants.

43:44
Finally, the certification for minority business enterprises is required of all consortium applications that include an MBE. Refer to Appendix B for the certification. The SF-424 is the title page of your application package. Some fields to note for the SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance Form [follows].

44:09
In line 8.D, make sure to include your zip code in the five-digit, plus four-digit format.

44:15
In line 12, list the NOFO numbers as NTIA-CMCPP-2021. In line 18, list the total federal budget requested for the entire project.

44:31
This amount will also be used in the SF-424A budget form and your detailed budget and budget narrative. Pay close attention to line 21, and prior to selecting "I agree," review the Certs and Reps in SAM.gov (which I mentioned are part of your organization's SAM entity registration) and the Certification Regarding Debarment and Suspension as described in Section 4, paragraph F of the NOFO.

45:01
Here, you'll see the Authorized Representative section, and the line where the electronic signature will go at submission. Remember, this is the signature of the person with the AOR role in grants.gov.

45:15
Some fields to note when completing the SF-424A budget form [follows]. Section B is a place to insert budget totals by object class category or cost category. Cost categories include direct costs, such as personnel, fringe benefits and supplies, and also includes indirect costs.

45:37
The CMC period of performance is two years. When you complete this form, input costs associated with year one in column one, and costs associated with year two and column two. The totals fields are calculated as you complete the form.

45:54
Verify that the total requested reflects the same amount as Item 18 in the SF-424. The cost category amounts, total direct charges, and indirect charges will be reflected in the detailed budget and budget narrative you prepare.

46:11
As noted in the NOFO, the CMC Pilot Program does not contain a cost sharing or matching funds requirement. However, applicants may propose to contribute a binding, voluntary, committed, non-federal cost share amount. Make sure to complete section C, *nonfederal resources*, if you propose such non-federal cost share.

46:35
In the budget narrative, you will clearly relate each of the activities proposed in the project narrative to the relevant section of the project budget. Prepare a detailed project budget and budget narrative that adequately describe all proposed activities and costs for the proposed grant funded project. Format the detailed project budget as a spreadsheet, and the budget narrative as a Word document.

47:00
In the project budget, provide a detailed and itemized breakdown of each line item within the cost categories used in the SF-424A. For example, in personnel, list the anticipated staff or positions needed for the proposed budget. Specify the level of effort and the total amount budgeted for each staff.

47:23
Another example: in supplies, [list] itemized supplies, materials, perhaps devices, needed to implement the proposed project. Include the estimated quantities and unit costs to support the proposed amount. The budget narrative is your opportunity to fully describe the necessity and basis for all costs. Again, by mirroring the SF-424A cost categories and the information from the spreadsheet, you will offer an extra level of clarity.

47:53
All costs proposed must reflect only allowable costs that are consistent with the project scope.

48:00
Information on cost allowability is available in the uniform administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements for federal awards at 2CFR, Part 200, which apply to awards in this program.

48:14
We covered general principles for cost allowability during our last webinar. If cost sharing or matching funds are included in the budget, identify the non-federal source and distinguish the non-federal and federal portions of the budget in the detailed project budget narrative.

48:35
The project narrative is an additional requirement and component of your application package. This is a narrative that describes a clearly defined project that best achieves the purpose of the CMC Pilot Program. It will identify specific tasks, measurable milestones, and performance outcomes resulting from the proposed project activities.

48:57
These are the components of the project narrative as described in section four of the NOFO: the executive summary (note it cannot exceed two pages); the eligibility and qualifications section, which includes a table of funded project participants and unfunded informal collaborators and resumes for key personnel (note that your application cannot include more than five resumes and each one cannot exceed one page in length); also within the narrative, incorporate the project justification, proposed project activities, and anticipated project results in evaluation planning.

49:37
Now that we've walked through the application package, I want to highlight this step attaching the required documents. It's easy to miss. The forms listed on the left side of the table I shared earlier are part of the standard application package and can be completed through the download application package process in grants.gov.

49:59
The attachments you prepare, such as the budget and project narratives, you'll have to add to your application package. You will do this through the SF-424 form. Specifically in item 15 of this form, there's an "Add Attachments" button. This is for the items listed in section four, paragraph B.6 through paragraph B.11, and section four, paragraph C.

50:26
Finally, we've reviewed multiple elements of your application package. Pay close attention to the formatting of the documents you submit with your application. I'll reiterate: applications must be submitted through grants.gov.

50:40
Paper, emailed, [and] fax submissions will not be accepted.

50:44
There are page limits for the project narrative, executive summary, and resumes.

50:50
Make sure documents are easy to read and 10-point minimum. With the exception of figures, graphs and images, the page layout must be portrait orientation. All applications and forms must be typed and in English. This is all laid out in section four, Paragraph E.

51:10
I've included here a table of helpful resources, which includes information or links on how to obtain a DUNS, the SAM.gov system, grants.gov training resources, and the grants.gov applicant support. Thank you for your time today. Please direct all grants management inquiries to the NIST Grants Officer Yongming (Ming) Qiu.

51:35
Now, to discuss the application review process, I turn it over to you, Karen.

51:45 – **Karen Perry**

Thank you, Mercedes. While Mercedes focused on the application submittal process, Janice Wilkins, Pandora Beasley-Timpson, and I are going to take you through the next process, which is the application review process. Janice?

52:02 – **Janice Wilkins**

Thanks, Karen. Today, I will give a broad overview on the grant process and the application timeline. There are four steps in this process. The pre-application portion, submission of your full application, the application review process, and the selection process. The first two are the applicant's responsibility. The last to refer to NTIA's action to further the process of your grant application. I want to highlight a couple of key elements for the pre-application submission phases. Applicants must register in SAM.gov and assure your grants.gov account is active. Submit a completed application on or before December 1, 2021, at 11:59 PM in grants.gov.

52:59

Upon receiving your grant application, NTIA will review applications according to NOFO rules and select application process.

53:11

On the next slide, Karen Perry will give you a little information about the evaluation and review process. Karen?

53:24 – **Karen Perry**

Thank you, Janice. Let's dig into the review process. There are three phases to this process: initial administrative review, the merit review, and then a programmatic review. The things that we're going to be looking for in the initial administrative review are really the completeness of the application, basic eligibility, and consistent with a high-level structure of the program.

53:46

The merit review is conducted by our expert reviewers, and they will also be looking for similar criteria. They will be scoring each of the applications on a scale of 0 to 100, and all applications that receive 70 or greater will advance to the next level.

54:04

The next level is our programmatic review, which NTIA does. We prioritize the reviewed applications, and we make sure that each of them meets the statutory guidelines for the program and the programmatic objectives.

54:19

So, what are the merit reviewers and NTIA going to be looking for as they go through your applications? The first 25 points of the evaluation criteria is associated with the project purpose. Does it fit in with the statutory guidelines and the purpose that was covered by Kevin earlier in this presentation? The next 35 points goes to greatest unmet financial need and the benefit of the project.

54:44

Then we have 20 points assigned for project viability and innovation. That's really looking at the feasibility of the project innovation as well as your organizational capability. Fifteen points are assigned to the budget and the reasonableness of that budget, and another five points are assigned to project evaluation.

55:03
Do you have an evaluation plan such that both you and we can learn from this project? As I noted, there's 35 points assigned to need, so I want to go into that in a little bit more detail.

55:17
We've shown you this slide before in other presentations, but I wanted to highlight it one more time because it is an important part of your application. We do need to award grants based on the greatest unmet financial need and we're looking for you to provide us information that will help us make that determination. The information we've asked for is information on your student population size, the number and percent of students that are eligible to receive [Federal] Pell Grants, the number and percentage of students who get need-based financial aid, and other indications of need based on your student population.

55:53
During the merit review phase, NTIA will analyze the submitted information for each of the criteria above and will develop an assessment of each institutions' student body-based unmet financial need. These assessments are ranked and compared, and then final recommendations for project approval and grant funding will be made for those eligible anchor institutions that have demonstrated the greatest unmet financial need.

56:20
NTIA's recommendations are based on five important factors. First, the scores and the technical comments that come out of the merit review process. Secondly, the analysis that is done by the NTIA program staff during the programmatic review phase.

56:37
Third, we need to, as indicated before, make sure that the statutory requirements of the program are set forth as it relates to all elements of the program, but particularly greatest financial need.

56:49
Fourth, we're going to look across other programs to avoid the duplication of funding with other investments. And fifth, obviously, the availability of funds.

57:02
If perchance you are submitting an application that includes community-based programs and you based your analysis on the CMC dashboard (which lists eligible tracts), if you feel that you have tracts that are eligible that are not listed on that dashboard and you would like to contest that analysis, we do welcome your input. And this is where you would give us that information.

57:28
All of our work is guided by federal guidelines and laws. You can expect that we will issue federal award notices [and] notifications to both successful and unsuccessful applicants. We will retain all of the applications, and we will meet other administrative and national policy requirements, including the uniform administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements.

57:53
But wait, there's more.

57:55
We also need to comply with a number of reporting requirements, both related to the financial reports, performance reports, and certification of the program. We need to meet audit requirements, close out

the program, and do all of this in accordance with the *Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006*.

58:14
Now, let's take it up a level and I'll ask Pandora to wrap up and tell you where we are in the program right now and what you can expect from us next. Pandora?

58:25 – **Pandora Beasley-Timpson**
Thank you, Karen.

58:27
So, the next thing that you can expect from us is the release of FAQs.

58:32
Then in March 2022, we will announce [the official notification of grant award approvals], after that, you can launch your CMC projects. A little about the second call for merit reviewers. This call is specifically for CMC candidates – we're looking for people like you with strong backgrounds in academia [and] experience with universities, mainly minority serving universities.

58:55
We're looking for our distance and remote learning experts. Anyone with experience working with under-resourced colleges, or anyone with experience with minority serving communities in general, as well as IT professionals with strong backgrounds in information technology and our leaders, our IT leaders, we're looking for you.

59:18
And we want to make sure that these professionals have a strong background in infrastructure and network expansion. We would love to have you join our team of merit reviews, so please get your resumes in.

59:32
And we'd like to see those resumes as soon as possible because the actual merit reviews for the CMC Program will take place between December and January – December of 2021 and January of 2022.

59:50
Again, we are committed to ensuring that reviewers come from diverse backgrounds and from all across the United States. So, if this interests you, we need your resume.

59:59
And we need your resume no later than September 30th, 2021. Please send it to grantreviewer@ntia.gov. We extend our sincerest thanks to all merit reviewers for their willingness to support our grant programs. We are greatly appreciative to their commitment and significant contribution to our grant expansion goals. We thank you!

1:00:22
Now, I'll hand it off to Francine to open Q&A Thank you.

1:00:50 – **Karen Perry**
I believe Francine is unavailable today because she had a family emergency, but we do have Kevin Hughes as our moderator.

1:00:58
And so Kevin will be our moderator for Q&A. I want to remind you that, if you have questions, you can put them in the chat, and we will do our best to answer them.

1:01:08
Hoping Kevin's audio is good.

1:01:16
While we're waiting for Kevin to come on, let me cover a couple of issues.

1:01:20
A number of people have asked about the availability of the PowerPoint, the video [recording], and/or the transcripts. And I wanted to let you know that all of those will be available on the BroadbandUSA website under Events-Past Events, about a week from today on the [25th]. So you'll be able to download all the information from last week's webinar and this week's webinar.

1:01:45
Kevin has joined us, so I'll let him – I'll ask him to take over.

1:02:02
Do you have audio, Kevin?

1:02:09
OK, while Kevin works on his audio, I'm going to make another announcement. The other announcement is that our first set of Frequently Asked Questions is already posted on our website. And we as a team are working very hard on the second set, which will be posted in about two weeks. The second set includes many of the more challenging questions that you've asked that we need to work very carefully on and also go through all of our legal review process. So that set will be available in another couple of weeks. Kevin, do we have you [on]?

1:02:58
So, I am going to highlight a couple of the questions that we've gotten thus far.

1:03:06
And also ask my panelists to highlight some of the ones that they've seen as well.

1:03:14
So, first off, we got a number of questions about eligible entities and which entities are eligible. So some of them were rather specific. Yes, the College of the Marshall Islands is eligible. It was eligible based on the 2020 matrix. I found it on our CMC dashboard, and I assume it will still be eligible in the 2021 matrix unless things radically changed in your organization.

1:03:41
Another question was specifically about Hispanic Serving Institutions. Both Title three and Title five institutions per the US. Department of Education's standards and guidelines are eligible institutions. So that includes the Hispanic institutions. If you want to find them on our Dashboard, just go to the top of the Dashboard where it says school eligibility type and use the drop-down menu for HSI. And I also want to remind you that you should use that drop-down menu for any of the other categories in order to get a good look up, the eligible institutions.

1:04:27
Emy is there when you want to highlight? And then we'll ask Ming to do the same.

1:04:35 – **Emy Tseng**
I think most of the questions are for Ming, so why doesn't he go ahead?

1:04:39 – **Karen Perry**
Ming – we got a couple of questions about indirect expenses as well as about match. And if you do have a match – well, let me do indirect expenses first rather than rolling them all together. So, would you highlight kind of how we look at indirect expenses?

1:04:58 – **Ming Qiu**
Thank you for the question. So, I think Scott mentioned in a good length in his presentation and [it's] also stated in the NOFO regarding indirect costs and how it's applied to the CMC program.

1:05:11
So indirect cost is allowed for the CMC Pilot Program, and if indirect costs are included in the proposed budget, you need to provide a copy of the approved negotiated agreement if this rate was negotiated with a cognizant agency.

1:05:28
If you do not have a rate at the time of the submission, you need to provide a statement to the fact that you do not have a negotiated rate at that time.

1:05:39
If a successful applicant included indirect costs in the budget, and has not established at the rate at that time, what the cognizant agency and the applicant will be required to obtain an indirect cost rate in accordance with the DOC standard terms and conditions, Section B.06.

1:06:01
You can refer back to the treatment of the indirect cost rate, the DOC standard terms and conditions for financial assistance. Also if an applicant does not have a currently negotiated indirect cost rate, including a provisional rate, the applicant may elect to charge indirect cost rate to the award pursuant to a de minimis rate of 10% of the modified total direct costs. However, the cost must be consistently charged either direct or indirect, and may not be a double charge or inconsistently apply to the award as both. So, thank you.

1:06:46 - **Karen Perry**
I'm going to ask you one more before I ask Emy one, and that is about the match. So I know that one of Kevin's favorite things about the slides is that there's no match required, and that's partly because this legislation came out of the COVID legislation, with an understanding that there are significant financial requirements and other requirements and challenges that all of our institutions and communities are facing right now.

1:07:15
But, what if an applicant wants to put in cost share information? Would you highlight how that is treated in both the application and in the review process?

1:07:27 – **Ming Qui**
Sure, thank you for that question as well.

1:07:29
I think we are excited about this program that there's no cost share requirement attached to the program. So, I think Kevin mentioned this in his presentation and Mercedes mentioned it in her

presentations as well, and information that's actually also stated in NOFO, the Notice of Funding Opportunity as well. So if they need more detail about that section, you can see that in the NOFO.

1:07:53
But the CMC Pilot Program does not have a cost sharing or matching funds requirement.

1:08:00
So, NTIA will not require cost share for the CMC Pilot Program and NTIA will not give a favorable consideration to the applications proposing voluntary cost share.

1:08:14
However, that does not prevent you from being nice to contribute costs here to the award.

1:08:21
So, an applicant may propose to contribute voluntary share to the award, if you do propose federal cost share, you should document the capacity to provide such matched funds in your application.

1:08:37
So, you need to explain that in your budget narrative and also identify in the budget how you're going to provide your non-federal cost share and what is used for.

1:08:47
And also, the non-federal cost share committed to an award by an eligible recipient will be treated as voluntary committed cost share.

1:08:57
Please note that if you committed cost share to the award voluntarily, and it's also a binding commitment under the award. So, in short, basically, that's no cost share required. Cost share we will not consider favorably. If you commit cost share to the award, it becomes binding to the award. Thank you.

1:09:21 – **Karen Perry**
Thank you.

1:09:23
Emy, a number of folks who have asked: do I need to provide community programs, or can I only provide an institutional program if I choose to? And if I do, how will that be considered?

1:09:36 – **Emy Tseng**
OK. So yes, the program allows for funding for both programs that build the capacity of the institution, as well as working in communities through consortia. And those are both allowed. And, in fact, some people have asked as one kind of project weighted more favorably than the other. And it's really up to you as institutions that are serving your communities to decide what type of program best serves your needs. So, there is no weighting on one or the other.

1:10:18
I do want to note that if you do decide as an eligible institution to undertake a program [or] a project that is focused on your institution, building the IT capacity, or offering specific classes, as well as partnering with MBE and non-profit as part of consortia, please submit one application that covers the different types of projects instead of submitting separate applications. Those should all be under one application.

1:10:59 – Karen Perry

Emy, I have another question about the community services. If an institution or a consortium that is led by an institution chooses to offer community services, can those services be offered broadly in the applicable census tracts, or only to minorities in the tracts?

1:11:21 – Emy Tseng

I don't know how one would distinguish. As much as possible, the work with community-based organizations or organizations that do focus on traditionally underserved and underrepresented groups would be a focus of that. And also, there are strict requirements in terms of the MBEs and business entities and having our minority business status. So I don't think there's necessarily a requirement per patron or per recipient, being mindful of working with organizations that serve underrepresented communities as well as the requirement to work with MBEs.

1:12:19 – Karen Perry

I'm going to ask you one more before I hand it over to Kevin who I bet has audio now.

1:12:23

And that is: what about apprentice programs either at the institution or in a community-based proposal? Are apprentice programs covered?

1:12:35 – Emy Tseng

Yes, they are covered. In fact, I think that's one of the more exciting aspects of this program – that work-based program and work-based education is recognized and can be funded under this program. So not only the training itself, but costs such as stipends can be covered under this program.

1:13:03 – Karen Perry

Kevin, do you have audio?

1:13:06 – Kevin Hughes

I certainly hope so. Can you hear me now?

1:13:09

Yeah. Thank you so much, team. [I] lost audio, of course, these things happen. But I wanted to jump in and thank you so much for covering team members for me. I wanted to jump in and ask the Ming as our representative from NIST (I'm not sure if this question was posed already), but there was a question in the chat referring to indirect costs.

1:13:38

I was just wondering if you guys covered that one?

1:13:45 – Karen Perry

We covered the general one unless there's a more specific question.

1:13:49 – Kevin Hughes

OK, no, I think that might have been the question asked.

1:13:55

I saw some other questions come in asking questions about the US Virgin Islands and the Marshall Islands, and were asking – for those questions, those questions were answered from the slide at the end of Scott's presentation.

1:14:15
But if more clarification is required on that, we ask folks to please contact the CMC team, and we can provide greater clarification on that.

1:14:26 – Karen Perry
Actually, let me add a little bit to that.

1:14:28
There's kind of two elements of the program. Of course, there's the institutional element and the community element. And your application can either be for your institution or for your community, or as Emy said, for both. The institutions that are listed on the CMC Dashboard, once we update it for 2021, are eligible.

1:14:49
So if you see like in the College of the Marshall Islands, your school is listed on the Dashboard, you are eligible to do school-based programs. So all the ones that Emy listed in the first few slides about all the kinds of upgrades, the apprenticeship, the classes, the IT infrastructure, the capacity building, you are eligible for that. You don't have to talk to us about that.

1:15:12
But if you want to provide community-based programs, the American Community Survey that we use as our base for analysis doesn't have the same data for some of those communities. So, if you want to provide community-based programs, that's where we need to have a conversation about your eligibility, and we'll be talking with you about it, call us anytime. Let's do it sooner rather than later.

1:15:36
But then later in your application, we're going to ask you to submit really your own justification for why those are low-income communities that you're going to be serving.

1:15:46 – Kevin Hughes
Right. Another question that I saw come into the chat – it's sort of asking a general question that I wanted to just make sure that we can punctuate.

1:15:55
The CMC grant is really a great grant, and the thrust is three main areas which will help with connectivity, with the purchase of equipment, as well as providing or hiring IT staff and personnel.

1:16:16
And of course, the main emphasis is targeted towards students who have the greatest need.

1:16:23
And so, for those of you who are contemplating submitting an application in for the CMC grant – and I hope all of you on today's webinar will do so – really I think if I can give any sort of direction or leadership on that matter, it would be that in your application you seek to tell a compelling narrative, if you will, and really speak to the unmet needs of your student population.

1:16:56
And I think that if you follow the NOFO, which is very clear in terms of what the mandates as set by Congress are, I think that you will be on the right road in terms of submitting a great application.

1:17:15
I wanted to take this time out as we go around [to] my distinguished colleagues here. And just see if there are any final questions or points that each of you wanted to punctuate as we prepare to close out today's webinar.

1:17:33
So, why don't we start with you, Karen.

1:17:38 – Karen Perry

I'll mention that we get a number of questions about larger broadband projects. Can I put in a 5G network? Can I put it in a Wi-Fi network? Can I put in my own fiber?

1:17:49
There's some limitations in this particular grant in terms of what kinds of external connectivity and construction you can do. As we mentioned, you can provide broadband services, like discounted services to your students, as well as to support the infrastructure on your university. But I also wanted to let you know that, unfortunately, we just closed the application period for our [Broadband] Infrastructure Program. If you're in a Tribal College or university, [the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program] application period is still open. Those grants both cover infrastructure.

1:18:26
And if we're lucky enough that the infrastructure bill is passed and signed into law, there is more funding there for infrastructure investment. So, there's some limitations here, but there are still bright spots on the horizon.

1:18:47 – Kevin Hughes

OK, thank you for that. Emy?

1:18:52 – Emy Tseng

Yes, I guess just to reiterate in terms of installations and internet infrastructure. Really, the focus is on campus. And even then, due to some regulations and restrictions around construction, these things will have to be evaluated. So, please let us know if you are planning such a project, but really, the focus is on campus infrastructure or upgrade, not off campus. But on the other hand, there are opportunities for partnerships and contractual agreements with ISPs as well.

1:19:43 – Kevin Hughes

Thank you for that. Ming, over to you.

1:19:46 – Ming Qiu

OK, I think there was a question asked before regarding whether or not we have a template for a detailed budget spreadsheet.

1:19:55
So, the answer to that is basically we do not have a template for the detail budget spreadsheet, but however, your budget should provide a detailed justification explaining all the costs in your budget that you're proposing.

1:20:11
And the detailed budget especially must reflect the cost categories that appears on the SF-424A. For example, if you have personnel, fringe benefits, supplies, contractual and other costs.

1:20:25
So your budget spreadsheet should explain itemized calculations or costs placed under those categories in your budget narratives.

1:20:36
And another thing I want to expand on is about indirect cost rate.

1:20:39
I think it was a question regarding if they have approved a federal indirect cost rate.

1:20:47 – **Kevin Hughes**
Right.

1:20:48 – **Ming Qiu**
So [do they] use that rate or can they choose to use a de minimis rate? Whether or not they [would] lose points if they ask for a full rate? So the answer to that question is – first of all, there is no points [lost] if you apply at full rate because the program allows indirect cost rate, and if you have an approved rate, we have to accept that on the approved rate in terms of proposing the direct costs to the budget.

1:21:19
The second part of that question to that is if you have [an] approved rate, you have to use your approved rate. And if you elect to use a charge lesser than the approved rate, you're allowed to do that. However, you are not allowed to choose the de minimis rate if you have an approved rate.

1:21:40
So, the definition, basically saying you know for using the de minimis rate only if you don't have a current negotiated indirect cost rate, including a provisional rate. That means if you have an approved rate already, then you're not allowed to use the de minimis rate.

1:22:00 – **Kevin Hughes**
Thanks so much for that. Yes. Thank you so much for that clarification, Ming. And that's a very important point that we definitely wanted to get across.

1:22:13
I just wanted to make sure that we had mentioned, of course, that our FAQs are available, and hopefully that has been a link to that has been placed in the chat, which I'm being told it has.

1:22:32
So, that's great, and I encourage all of you on the webinar to please go and take a look at our first round of frequently asked questions, which will be very helpful to you in terms of crafting and putting together your application.

1:22:48
We are already working on our second round of FAQs, and those will be available shortly.

1:22:57
The other thing is, and I don't know if my colleagues had mentioned this as well, is that this webinar, as well as the slides will be available next week on our website.

1:23:08
So you'll be able to go back at your leisure and view all of this great information that our team has provided for you today, and we really encourage you to do so.

1:23:21
So team, I wanted to just ask if there was anything else that you wanted to put out there before we close.

1:23:30
I think we've nailed it all.

1:23:32 – Emy Tseng
One more question that I like to, just because it came out in yesterday's webinar about the possible roles of MBEs, non-profit organizations, and other for-profit organizations.

1:23:50
And there are – again, the idea is that the consortia would be led by an eligible educational institution. But for example, if they decided to partner with a non-profit, or even a for-profit, to offer training they do through the communities, that relationship can be established. The training does not only have to happen within the institution. The other way that a non-profit or business might participate, for example, an ISP, they can enter a contractual agreement. So an institution may enter into a contractual agreement with an ISP to provide services either on campus or even potentially off campus. That contractual agreement is allowed, as well as MBEs and non-profits may also be in some ways recipients of the program benefits in terms of getting training and supplies and such. There's a lot of flexibility in the role that non-profits and MBEs and other businesses can play in this grant program.

1:25:13 – Karen Perry
Kevin, before you wrap up, and I know you've got a couple of wrap up slides, I do want to ask Emy one more question. Emy put a lot of heart and soul, and brought [that] into many of the elements of the NOFO. And as she was doing it, she oftentimes talked about how excited she was about the possibilities of this program. And I just wanted to, before we close out, I just wanted to know, is there something you want to highlight about what makes this kind of exciting to you?

1:25:44 Emy Tseng
Sure. I think a lot of it is the flexibility, and really leveraging your roles as educational institutions that really help communities that have not been necessarily served by the latest technology advances. It's really an opportunity for you all to build a more inclusive innovation system.

1:26:08
And so, that's really what probably excites me the most. And really partnering with you all to do that and bringing diversity and equity into the technology field.

1:26:21 – Karen Perry
And when Emy says community, she means both university community and outside community, because both are eligible.

1:26:30 – Kevin Hughes
That's right.

1:26:31
And also just to punctuate that fact, this grant really helps to address the digital divide.

1:26:38
And it helps to advance America and the minority communities with regards to utilizing broadband for economic development, for education, and even for distance learning as we are struggling with these times during COVID.

1:27:00
So it's all relevant. And again, the CMC grant, is a great, great opportunity for institutions all across America and for communities all across America.

1:27:13
So with that said, we do have a few closing slides that we'd like to close out with.

1:27:20
We'd like to, first of all, thank you all for attending today's webinar. It's been great. We know it's been a tremendous amount of information that you received.

1:27:30
And again, all of the people that you have here on the screen, members of the CMC team, and of course, Ming, from our sister organization, NIST, we are all standing by ready and waiting to assist in any way that we can.

1:27:47
We're doing outreach all the time with regards to getting the word out on this grant. And if you don't hear back from us immediately, please, we ask for your patience.

1:27:58
We are fielding a lot of interest on this grant, which we totally appreciate it and love, and we will get back to you shortly.

1:28:08
So here we have dates for our upcoming webinar series, and we ask that you try to visit all of them. But with regards to CMC, our next webinar will take place in September (September 22nd and 23rd) and then in October (October 20th and 21st).

1:28:34
So, those are important dates for webinars for you [to] attend.

1:28:39
I believe there's one other slide. Or is that it? Well – it's thank you!

1:28:50
Thank you again to all of you for joining us on this really, really great webinar, and an opportunity to learn and to share this information with you. As I said, we're standing by to help you in any way that we can. The email addresses that you see here, the broadbandUSA@NTIA.gov email is our general email address, and there you see our email addresses for our senior broadband specialist Scott Woods, as well as for Dr. Francine Alkisswani. And you can email them or the general box and we will get back to you.

1:29:34
OK? The Indicators of Broadband Need map – the web link for that is below and we encourage you to visit that as well as well as the CMC Dashboard, which we've talked about earlier.

1:29:47

So I believe that's it. From all of us here, the CMC team and NTIA, thank you so much for joining us today and please do have a wonderful rest of your day. Thank you.