

OVERVIEW/VISION

The Office of Minority Broadband Initiatives (OMBI) in the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) in the US Department of Commerce was created by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (CAA). The purpose of OMBI is to promote equitable broadband access and adoption at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), and in their surrounding anchor communities. OMBI's guiding vision is to achieve digital equity for minority communities across the United States. In the CAA legislation, OMBI was given the mandate to expand high speed internet access, promote digital inclusion, and close the digital divide through broadband programs and digital opportunities.

The legislation directs OMBI to collaborate with state, local and tribal governments, HBCUs, TCUs, MSIs and stakeholders in the communications, education, business and technology fields to:

- Develop recommendations to promote the rapid deployment and accelerated adoption of broadband internet, to include veterans and seniors in anchor communities.
- Provide virtual and in-person training on digital literacy and education, as well as facilitate professional development partnerships with private and public sectors.
- Facilitate professional development partnerships with private and public sectors to ensure that IT personnel and students have the skills needed to work with new and emerging technologies with respect to high-speed internet access service.
- Leverage investment in high-speed internet infrastructure to expand connectivity in anchor communities; encourage investment in qualified opportunity zones; and prompt high speed internet adoption to impact job growth, economic development, and advanced technology deployment.

OMBI was also directed to collaborate with other federal agencies that carry out broadband internet service support programs to determine how to expand access to broadband internet service and other digital opportunities in anchor communities.

CONNECTING MINORITY COMMUNITIES PILOT PROGRAM

OMBI has direct oversight over the Connecting Minority Communities (CMC) Pilot Program, a \$268 million grant program to HBCUs, TCUs, and MSIs for the purchase of high-speed internet access service and eligible equipment or to hire and train information technology personnel. CMC serves eligible recipients including: Historically Black Colleges or Universities (HBCUs); Tribal Colleges or Universities (TCUs); Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) including - Hispanic Serving Institutions, Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTI), Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions (ANNH), Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISI), Predominantly Black Institutions (PBI) and, Consortia led by HBCUs, TCUs or MSI that include a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) or Tax-Exempt 501(c)(3) Organizations. To learn more about CMC and CMC awardees visit **Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program | BroadbandUSA (doc.gov)**.

Learn more about how OMBI can assist with increasing internet access and digital equity within your community. Contact us at CMC@NTIA.gov or (202) 482-2048.



OMBI collaborates with MSI community anchor institutions and their surrounding communities to provide information on federal funding made available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that provided more than \$48 billion to NTIA for infrastructure deployment, skills, training, and access to technologies essential to provide Internet for All. OMBI encourages HBCUs, TCUs, MSIs, community anchor institutions, and other minority stakeholders to play a role in the planning of this historic investment. It is imperative that OMBI stakeholders coordinate with their [State Broadband Office](#) to ensure that they are involved in both the BEAD and Digital Equity Act planning processes. OMBI Federal Program Officers (FPOs) can help connect you to the appropriate people in the broadband offices. Interested minority entities can apply directly for BIL program funding. Communities of color can impact the BIL programs' planning efforts and activate their networks' connections with trusted anchor institutions (i.e., libraries, churches, civil rights organizations, non-profits, etc.) to ensure that their voices are heard. Below are ways OMBI stakeholders can get involved with BIL programs.

BROADBAND EQUITY, ACCESS, AND DEPLOYMENT (BEAD)

\$42.45B IN FUNDING

- **Apply to be a subgrantee**, if eligible, to use BEAD funds for planning, infrastructure deployment, and adoption programs.
- If not directly eligible, collaborate with Eligible Entities in the planning process to advocate for vulnerable communities.
- Share current local high-speed internet availability and infrastructure deployment challenges, as well as future needs of high-speed internet infrastructure.
- Reach out to your state broadband office to get involved with the planning process and stay involved across the timeline.

STATE DIGITAL EQUITY PLANNING GRANT PROGRAM (DE)

\$2.75B IN FUNDING

- **Apply to be a subgrantee**, if eligible, to assist in the development of the State DE Plan.
- Collaborate with Administering Entities in the planning process.
- Share specialized insight on adoption and affordability into DE plans, contributing ideas on community specific development, broadband needs, and ways to address the needs of vulnerable communities and the covered populations.
- **Apply for a DE Competitive Grant, which is a future and separate grant opportunity, via the NTIA Grants Portal** to implement DE projects.

MIDDLE MILE GRANT PROGRAM (MM)

\$1B IN FUNDING

- The application period for **MM is now closed**; however, there are still ways to [coordinate with MM grant recipients in your area](#) on middle mile infrastructure projects.

TRIBAL BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM (TBCP)

~\$3B IN FUNDING

- The application period for the first \$2B of TBCP funding is now closed, however, NTIA has reserved approximately \$1B in additional grant funding for broadband deployment. In the meantime, you can [coordinate with TBCP grant recipients in your area](#).

