

DOC-NTIA-OTIA (US)
Connecting Minority Communities (CMC) Pilot Program

Moderator: Gilbert Resendez
June 23th, 2021

Gilbert Resendez:

1:09

Hi folks, my name is Gilbert. I'm just jumping on to let everyone know that unfortunately for a portion of this webinar, if you are using the phone audio dialing in with that phone bridge for the audio of this webinar, you will not be able to hear a portion of the webinar. The solution that we do have is that if you're able to download the GoToWebinar app from the Apple store or Google Play Store, you should be able to hear the prerecorded portion of the webinar. Again, we apologize for this but that is the solution that we have. We'll get started here shortly. Hold on for a couple more minutes. Thank you very much.

2:28

Hello! And welcome to this month's installment of BroadbandUSA's NTIA Grant Webinar Series of NTIA's Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program.

2:39

My name is Gilbert Resendez. I am Broadband Program Specialist here at NTIA, supporting our states' programs and outreach. Today, I will be your host and moderator for this webinar.

2:50

Before we get started, I have a few housekeeping notes to go over. First, please type all of your questions in the Q&A box on the right-hand side of your screen. These questions will later be published on our Q&A portion of our website. We also have an overview of the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021 on our website. This is the enacting legislation for our Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program, as well as all of our other NTIA grant programs. And then, finally, this presentation, a recording, and transcript, will be available on the BroadbandUSA website, under events/past events, no later than June 30th.

3:35

I would like to next introduce our panelists. Again, my name is Gilbert Resendez, and I have been with NTIA for two years, and will be your moderator for today. Our first presenter is Mr. Scott Woods. Scott is a Senior Broadband Program Specialist here at NTIA. Scott joined NTIA in 2010 during the BTOP Program. At NTIA, Scott manages the BroadbandUSA Technical Assistance program. Prior to coming to NTIA, he was an Associate Attorney at Bingham McCutchen in its Telecommunications and Media practice. He holds a Bachelor's Degree from Morehouse College, Master of Arts in Public Policy from American University, and a law degree from Howard University School of Law.

4:22

Our second presenter, is Doctor Francine Alkisswani. Dr. Alkisswani is a Senior Policy Analyst at NTIA. She joined NTIA as an Evaluation Specialist for the Technology Opportunities Program. And now leads our Minority Broadband Initiative or MBI working with historically black colleges and universities, Tribal colleges and universities, and Minority Serving Institutions. Since being at NTIA, she's been very committed to advocating for providing technical assistance and support of digital inclusion for vulnerable populations and broadband access for HBCUs in our communities. Dr. Alkisswani earned her Doctor of Philosophy and Sociology from the University of Pittsburgh, where she was both a Mellon Fellow and Rockefeller postdoctoral Fellow.

5:14

Thank you to both of you for giving your time to present today.

5:19

Next, I'd like to go over our agenda. On today's agenda, we'll start with a discussion of the codification of the CMC Pilot Program through the Final Rule. Next, Scott and Francine will give an overview of the CMC Final Rule. Then Scott will give a demonstration of our CMC Anchor Community Eligibility Dashboard. Francine will then discuss our stakeholder outreach, listening sessions and pre-application technical assistance. Before I turn it back to Scott, we will go over the next steps of the CMC Pilot Program. I will then close it out with a brief discussion on our call for merit reviewers that we've put out for all of our grant programs, close out our webinar and open up our Q&A session.

6:06

So with that, I will now go over our codification and overview of the CMC Pilot Program.

6:13

We are pleased to announce that we have released our Final Rule for our Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program. You can find a copy of that rule, as well as a press release announcing that rule linked here on the slide, as well as on the BroadbandUSA and NTIA websites. This Final Rule establishes the regulations and the rules of the program as required by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021. It also lays out the programmatic scope and eligibility criteria for the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program.

6:49

Later, we will publish our Notice of Funding Opportunity on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), and we will have more information for that as it becomes available.

7:00

Next, I just want to give a quick high-level overview of the program before turning it over to Scott and Francine.

7:08

This is a \$268 million Pilot Program. Eligible recipients include historically black colleges and universities, Tribal colleges and universities, and Minority Serving Institutions, or consortia of Minority Business Enterprises, or a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization that are led by one of those institutions of higher education that I named.

7:41

Entities may use this funding for the purchase of broadband Internet access, or service or for eligible equipment, or to hire and train IT personnel for the eligible institution of higher education to facilitate distance learning and instruction, or to operate the Minority Business Enterprise or to operate a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization. We anticipate that the application window for this program to open mid-August.

8:17

Next, I'd like to go over the CMC Program requirements. First, I want to emphasize that there's no matching requirement for the CMC Pilot Program. Additionally, there's a two-year period of performance. Next, at least 40% of the grant funds will be awarded to HBCUs, and that's defined in the Statute in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021. Additionally, at least 20% of all grant funds awarded to eligible recipients must be used to provide equipment or devices to students for broadband access to students. And then finally, recipients must prioritize students who are in need per the needs criteria that we defined.

9:09

And with that, I will pass it over to Scott Woods.

9:13

Scott Woods:

Thank you, Gilbert, for the overview of codification of the CMC Final Rule. Good afternoon everyone, my name is Scott Woods. I'm the senior Broadband Program Specialist here with NTIA. It's my pleasure to be with you on this afternoon to provide an overview of the CMC Final Rule and to announce the recent development we have with the release of a tool that will help you as we move forward with the CMC Pilot Program.

9:42

So, again, just to recap: the Pilot Program, the funding purposes, and this is outlined in the Final Rule. Grant funds awarded may only be used for the following purposes. Number one, the purchase of 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. We've already talked about the purchase or lease of eligible equipment and devices for student and/or patron use, again, subject to the program restrictions and prohibited uses that will be outlined in the coming Notice of Funding Opportunity.

10:28

And then finally, to hire and train information technology personnel who are part of the eligible institution of the Minority Broadband Enterprise, or the tax exempt 501(c)(3) organization. And again, we will have much more details including examples in the NOFO for your review. And as Francine will talk about here shortly, our outreach and technical assistance activities. We can get into more details and really be able to answer and address any of the questions and comments that you may have.

11:02

So, as we talked about on the previous webinar, the Act directed NTIA to develop several new methods to establish and verify CMC eligibility. Number one: again, this is just a recap, identify and verify that an applicant is an HBCU, TCU, or one of the subcategories of MSI, Minority Serving Institutions, or as the Act calls them, the eligible recipients.

11:30

We also had a charge to identify and map the anchor communities that are within the 15-mile radius of each eligible recipient institution. Again, the HBCUs, the TCUs, or the MSIs, and that meets the estimated median annual household income of not more than 250% of the poverty threshold.

11:54

Number three: In consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, determine a separate anchor community boundary for Tribal Colleges and Universities that are located on land held in trust by the United States. And again, I'm excited to announce that for these particular prongs 1-3, we've developed a tool that I'll walk you through just a few minutes that will help you in that anchor community for eligibility determination for participation in the CMC Program.

12:27

Number four: Identify which eligible recipients have the greatest unmet financial need. I will talk about that in a little bit more detail. And then as we discussed before, we will rely on certification for the MBEs and tax exempt, 501(c)(3)'s. Again, the consortium applicants who will participate as long as it's led by an HBCU, TCU, or MSI. We have a process by which we validate your status for eligibility in the CMC Program.

13:01

So, I want to spend a little bit of time, so again as I talked about before, items 1 through 3, we developed an exciting new tool for you to use and access. I'll get into that real shortly, but I wanted to spend some time on the greatest unmet financial need to determine which eligible recipients have students with the greatest unmet financial needs. Each applying institution must provide the following information in their application, or as much information that is reasonably available to the institution to include any supplementary information to explain the data.

13:39

Now again, we deal with this in detail in the forthcoming Notice of Funding Opportunity, but I wanted to spend some time really talking about this greatest unmet financial need requirement. Because as you go through the Final Rule and as you look at the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 which authorizes the CMC, now we've interpreted this requirement to apply to both the institutions and the students. And so, again, so you will see a particular framework, a particular approach of how we're going to govern and determine greatest unmet financial need in the NOFO and then in the corresponding application process. But again, we're looking at things like student population size, the number and percentage of students who are eligible to receive Federal Pell grants, the number or percentage of students who receive other need based financial aid from the federal government of state, or that individual institution, the number and percentage of students who qualify as low-income consumers, the number and percentage of students who are low-income individuals, the number and percentage of students who have been approved to receive unemployment insurance benefits under any federal and state laws since March 1st, 2020. Now we understand that items 1 through 3, most schools have access, readily available access to that information.

15:06

We do understand that items 4 through 6 may not be readily available, so we do understand that that is an issue. We addressed that in the Notice of Funding Opportunity, and we will address this with you when the NOFO comes out, as well as with our outreach and our technical assistance activity. So, again, stay tuned for that, but we do realize that that may be a challenge for some institutions to be able to provide all of this information. And, again, as you submit this information with your application, we will analyze this during the merit review phase. And we will develop that assessment of each institution's student body base of unmet financial needs. And again, this slide breaks down how we will deal with that.

15:56

Again, we have a section in the NOFO that deals precisely and explicitly with eligible entities, eligibility, greatest unmet financial need, our merit and programmatic review phases. So, again, this is just a preliminary review. We ask that, again, when we release the NOFO, we will have much more detailed information for you in that process, in that document, so that you can apply for the CMC Grant Program.

16:31

Then, finally, again, we're going to self-certify, we're going to have you self-certify for those consortium applicants as your status as a Minority Business Enterprise. That certification will be contained in the NOFO. And again, for the tax exempt 501(C)(3) status, we will check the Tax-Exempt Organization Portal by the IRS, and that's indicated here as a screenshot, as well as the precise web address that we'll use for that portal.

17:03

So, again, just wanted to give you an overview of that. So, without further ado, it is my extreme pleasure and I'm really excited to announce this is the release of our CMC Anchor Community Eligibility Dashboard.

17:19

And so, what you will see here, and I'm going to release this address in just a second. You will be able to access the eligibility dashboard. You'll be able to make some determinations about your anchor communities that surround your institutions, and again, we're really excited to announce that. Before I do, there are a number of caveats that I have to go through. So just bear with me before we get to the launch of the dashboard.

17:49

So, again, in the interest of promoting transparency and strengthening the selection process, we've developed this publicly available and searchable CMC Anchor Community Eligibility Dashboard that lists the eligible recipient institutions by type and shows the qualifying Census tracts within a 15-mile radius of each institution. This dashboard was developed using NTIA's National Broadband Availability Map with capabilities and publicly available data from the US Census Bureau and the United States Department of Education, and it reflects our application of the anchor community eligibility methodology that's described in the Final Rule.

18:35

The public posting of this dashboard will provide potential applicants the opportunity to view your anchor community eligibility determinations, and that's based on household size and the poverty threshold calculations. And you can see that methodology in the Final Rule. And the eligible recipients could designate for program activity. So again, you don't have to do the anchor community analysis for work in the community. But again, if you're doing it with a consortium, with an MBE, with a 501(c)(3), or if the school wants to do programming on its own in the community or with students in the community, we've launched this tool that will help you make that anchor community determination.

19:23

And so, while this tool, this dashboard, has identified the total universe of areas that an applicant could serve, in the end, it's up to each individual applicant to identify the specific anchor communities that it intends to serve in its application, if that is indeed a part of your project.

19:44

So, again, applicants and the general public can view, search, and access your own anchor community profile for all eligible recipient institutions at the following address, and it's going to be here in this presentation. I will also have a link to it at the end, as well, but you can find the precise address is <https://broadbandusa.ntia.gov/cmcdashboard>.

20:18

So, again, we are excited about this, and I wanted to conduct a live demonstration of this tool right now as we speak. So, I'm going to click this link, and that will take me to the tool.

20:36

So, when you select the link, it will take you to the Connecting Minority Communities Anchor Community Eligibility Dashboard. And I'm going to walk through several of the capabilities of this, but first, I am calling your attention to the About tab. The About tab contains all of the caveats, our methodology, and an understanding of how we've developed this dashboard and the governing rules and methodologies that apply.

21:04

First and foremost, I want you to know that this Anchor Community Dashboard is for information purposes only and is intended solely to assist potential applicants to better understand the CMC Pilot Program, and the requirements set forth in the Final Rule for this program. So again, this dashboard is not intended to supersede, modify, or otherwise alter applicable statutory or regulatory requirements, or the specific requirements that are set forth, excuse me, in the Final Rule, and the upcoming Notice of Funding Opportunity.

21:42

Final legal caveat, in all cases, statutory and regulatory mandates and the requirements set forth in the Final Rule and the NOFO shall govern and prevail over any inconsistencies contained in the dashboard. That's the legal caveat. You'll find that in the About tab here. But you will also find our methodology. This reflects what's in the Final Rule, but it walks you through how we've developed the anchor community eligibility analysis that you will see reflected in this dashboard. So, again, you walk through here on the About tab, it walks you through all of the assumptions. Again, for the poverty threshold analysis. I want to spend a little bit of time here on this.

22:27

Again, we have a 250% poverty threshold determination here. The Census 2019 poverty threshold level, and the average household size, and the reason why this is important, because I'm going to walk you through so you really understand how we determine and come up with these calculations and determinations. For average household size, for any Census tract that has an average household size of one or less, we've used the corresponding 2019 poverty threshold as \$13,011 and then the corresponding 250% poverty threshold calculation, if you will, is \$32,528. It's pretty standard. Pretty straightforward. In the previous webinar, we provided links to all of those publicly available data sources by the U.S. Census Bureau. Again, you can access and conduct your own analyses, but, also, we have rounded up the average household size, and I'm going to walk you through that here. So, for an average household size that is greater than one, and less than, or equal to two, we've rounded all those up

for an average household size of two to correspond with a Census poverty threshold level of household size of two, which is \$16,521. And then the corresponding 250%, poverty threshold calculation would then be \$41,303. And again, we've done this and I want to highlight here.

24:06

We tell you here that we've rounded up, to the next whole number, household size to determine the applicable weighted average poverty threshold. We did this specifically to ensure now that the CMC Program's eligibility standards include as many communities in need as possible. So, if you recall the webinar that we conducted before, we did a little different analysis, a layout of the analysis of how we would make the anchor eligibility determination. We've now tightened up on that, really addressed it, again, to ensure that the program eligibility standards include as many communities in need as possible. So, you'll see that methodology here, you also see our statement on margins of error, and you can read through that, as well. But let's get to the exciting part, which is the actual demo.

25:04

So, the first thing, as I talked about before, again, go to the About Tab. That contains the caveat that contains the methodology, all the information that you'll know reflects our analysis, our methodology of the anchor community eligibility.

25:21

What you're going to do first is hit the List tab, make sure because that's going to list all of the anchor community Census tracts when you select the school eligibility type and the corresponding information that's up here above on this bar.

25:41

So, your school type is here. So again, all of the school types are going to be here again, the two legislatively mandated HBCUs and TCUs. And then also the five sub categories or sub-designate MSI's. So again, Hispanic serving institutions-HSI's, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian (ANNH,) PBI's (Predominantly Black Institutions,) AANAPISI (Asian American, Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions,) and the Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTI.) You will see all of those listed here by type, the state and the school's name.

26:28

So, for purposes of utilizing this dashboard, I asked you to utilize the drop-down boxes here, and that will populate the list category here on the side. So, if I'm an AANAPISI school, let's say, for example, I want to select AANAPISI schools in Missouri. I will go down and select Missouri as a state and then the school's name. It will show me of the three schools that are designated AANAPISI schools in Missouri. So, for this particular case, I'm going to use Saint Luke's College of Health and Sciences.

27:07

All right. So, if you have that and you have the list tab already selected you will see all of the anchor communities, the Census tracts that are designated within the 15-mile radius of Saint Luke's College of Health Sciences, as well as the application of the poverty threshold data that will make these Census tracts qualify for Saint Luke's College of Health and Science. So, again, if we go back to program purposes, you know, Saint Luke's could decide, you know, we just want to focus in on improving broadband access on campus. You know, for our students, maybe providing broadband equipment and devices for our students on campus, they can do that. To the extent the institution wants to do work in the community, or wants to be a part or lead a consortium. You know? These are the designated communities upon which we would fund for consideration. Again, totally up to the school. The school has to make the case and put that information in the application. So, you can see that you see the 15-mile radius here.

28:22

The 15-mile radius, we've utilized the recipient's official address as reported to the US. Department of Education and the National Center for Education Statistics, that national database. There are links to those databases, both in the Final Rule and in our previous presentation that we conducted in the May webinar.

28:50

So, again, I want to highlight, again, if any part of that Census tract falls within the 15-mile boundary, we consider that entire Census tract eligible for the purposes of the CMC Pilot Program in order to exclude potentially eligible communities. So, as you play with the tool, as you utilize it to, again, you will see 15-mile radius, in some cases, cuts through Census tracts. But for purposes of eligibility, you know, we've determined that that Census tract is indeed eligible for CMC Program.

29:27

So, when you select on a particular Census tract, the dialog box will contain all of the underlying data that went into a decision, the determination of anchor community eligibility for that Census tract. So, in this particular example, we selected Census tract, it shows the median household income for that Census tract is \$31,042 dollars. The average household size was 2.49. The Census 2019 poverty threshold for that household size, \$20,335, a calculation of the, not more than 250% poverty threshold, \$50,838. And then a determination of whether that specific Census tract does qualify.

30:19

So, again, school type, school name. All of that is contained therein. All of this within the 15-mile radius or boundary for the school. And you can run through all of the other scenarios, all of the other Census tracts that are applicable.

30:40

If you want to go to the List tab, and if you select on an individual Census tract, you will see here in the, in the boundary radius, it will be surrounded by purple highlighted in purple, again, for what you're talking about. So, again, depending on your comfort, depending on your ease of effort, you can select the individual Census tract, or go through for the List tab. You have to have the List tab on to be able to see all of the Census tract. All of that information is contained here or, again, if you want to just, you know, again, highlight each individual Census tract, we've made that easier for you as well.

31:21

Now, you will see up here too, it'll be 1 of 2. Right. So, you can look at 1 of 2 and it'll show you information for the corresponding Census tract for another institution, right. So again, we understand we built into this model you know you may have an HSI school, Hispanic Serving Institution, in the same vicinity as an AANAPISI school, alright? For program purposes, you know, each school would have to determine, you know, anchor community eligibility for the Census tract. But again, for ease of application to understand that this is comprehensive, you can see that this particular Census tract would be eligible under both Saint Luke's as an AANAPISI, or if we go here under Donnelly College as an HSI.

32:16

Now, the reason why you don't see Donnelly College here, and I want everyone to utilize the toolbar's upfront, is because we've only highlighted AANAPISI schools in Missouri, and that specific school name. So, it's only going to show visually on the screen, the school that meets that criterion. So, you won't see Donnelly College visually reflected here, but, again, you know, you will see it here, dictated by this tab bar up here on that individual screen.

32:52

So, let's go to another example here, from the drop-down box, so we'll select, let's try Texas. Scroll down, you select Texas, All right? That will list all of the AANAPISI's in Texas. All the ANNH schools if any in Texas and the HBCU's in Texas. Let's look at the HSI schools. So again, make sure that my list tab is on, I want to go to east Texas here. Right, Northeast Texas Community College. Alright, I can go directly, but again, if I want to populate that list, you want to go over here, find Northeast Texas Community College here and again, it will populate all of the eligible Census tracts here on the list tab. But, again, I see here on the graphic visualization, I'm able to see the Census tracts that are eligible. Another thing I want to highlight here as a layer function, we also have layers here that I can turn on. So, if I wanted to see the ACS median household income for all of the tracts, I would turn that on.

34:11

And as you can see here, we have highlighted the median income, excuse me, for all of the Census tracts impacted in or around Northeast Texas Community College. Even the ones that aren't highlighted, you can see why, right? Because they have really, really high median household incomes. Right? But, if I also wanted to see the household size and do my own back of the envelope calculation, I can do that as well. So, I could turn off, have to turn off the median household income layer, turn on the ACS, household size, or Census tracts. And then I can see all of the individual average household size, median household sizes for each of those Census tracts. But for purposes of ease of application, those are turned off. But we've highlighted those that are indeed eligible.

35:08

So again, we encourage you to conduct your own analysis based on the publicly available data. But also, if you wanted to use this tool, again, it makes it much easier for you to do so.

35:24

I want to go through another example really quick, and this shows the application of the Rule. If you recall from the previous slide, we looked at the eligibility requirements of one through three. If you recall prongs 1 through 3. And if you recall, number three, calls for us to work with the Secretary of the Interior to come up with a comparable anchor community methodology and determination that's statistically comparable to the anchor community eligibility estimation that we, that we developed in the anchor community analysis. So, if I went back to that slide, you can see that, but I want to show this graphically, visually, here you can see, that some of the Tribal schools here have the traditional 15-mile radius. And there's others that we've applied this alternative methodology per prong number three, to, again, make sure that we are capturing in a fair and equitable manner.

36:33

I mean, applying the eligibility standard in a way that is comparable to the 15-mile radius anchor community eligibility standard that we talked about before. So, for the Tribal schools, you actually see both methodologies here. So, if you say, well, why does this look different? This is because, for, you know, the Tribal school that it was applicable to, we apply that alternative methodology. And we lay all that out for you in the Final Rule, but I did want to highlight that for you. For the Tribal schools, you will see some that have the traditional 15-mile boundary, and then some that we call the comparable distance anchor community eligibility determination that we've applied to that school as well. So, you can see that.

37:27

So, again, we want to make sure the state is highlighted. So, for here, I'm going to go to Montana. Right, so I want to go to Montana, and I see all the schools here, and then once I select the school's name, then my list

populates and then I can see all of the eligible Census tracts, again, that will qualify for the CMC Program.

37:56

Let's go through one more example. We have gone through the HSI's, we've done TSU's, we've done and AANAPISI's. Let's go through the ANNH. So, what you will see right now. We just clicked on that. Now, there are some schools that qualify, there are some schools that are designated in more than one category. So again, just highlighted one here. Chief Dull Knife College qualifies both as Tribal and as Alaska Native-Native Hawaiian Institution. So again, you can see that in the app that you will have in this tool, various schools that will qualify under various designations by the Department of Education.

38:49

Again, for program purposes, we're only going to allow one application for that school type. But again, for accuracy of information, accuracy of presentation, we want you to know that there are some schools that are reflected in more than one category. It's reflected here in this tool.

39:12

Finally, let's do an HBCU example. So, I encourage all of you to access this tool, use it. Utilize it, ask questions. And we'll be addressing this in our outreach, as well as in our technical assistance as well.

39:30

I'm going to do one more example of an HBCU. Let's go to Oklahoma. Look at the school's name, there's Langston University in Oklahoma. And again, you can see the 15-mile radius of the application of the Anchor Community Eligibility standard, the poverty threshold, you can see that for Langston University. And so, again, you know, specific information, I click on this Census tract and I can get all the information. And, again, if I want to just highlight on the list tab, all of those Census tracts when I click on it, it will highlight in purple as an outline on all of that information.

40:15

So, again, very good information and we're excited about this tool. We hope we've made this easier for you to access and conduct the anchor community determination based on the median household income data and the poverty threshold. Again, we will have specific information in the NOFO with respect to the margin of error, with respect to any disputes or challenges. Again, understanding that some of the data that's provided by the ACS is based on estimates, sampling estimates. Those estimates are, do have margin of error as a part of those. So, again, look for the NOFO, we deal specifically with how we treat that. If you have any reason to believe that a Census tract that was not referenced here would indeed qualify, we outline that procedure on how you can, but, for lack of a better word, challenge, or dispute, you know, that determination and include that in your application. So, we do address that in the NOFO.

41:26

OK, so again, I encourage everyone to use this tool. You know, again, we'll be soliciting feedback from you in our outreach process. Working with you if you have any questions about, you know, the Census tracts and what that means in terms of your consortia partnerships, consortia applicants, as well as any work the schools can do in the community with students and members of the community. So again, if you are indeed listed here, you have, again, this is a reflection of those three prongs of eligibility. So, all of the legislatively defined HBCU's are in here, legislatively defined TCUs are in here, and then all of the above the five-sub delineated MSI categories are in here as well per the 2020 Eligibility matrix. So, the methodology, the rationale, the approach is all laid out in the Final Rule. Again, specifically how we apply, it is also here on the About tab.

42:40

We look forward to any information, any feedback, that you can provide. Again, we'll be seeking that. We'll be working with you during our specific outreach strategy. So, encourage, again, everyone to use the tool.

42:55

We're excited about it. We have exciting new capabilities that we can use under our National Broadband Availability Map. So please, utilize the tool and give us information as we continue to work with you on our outreach efforts. So that's the tool. I've released the addresses. I will have the address for you at the end of the presentation. And at this time, it's my pleasure to turn it over to Francine Alkisswani who will talk about stakeholder outreach and our plans for technical assistance. Francine, over to you.

43:39

Francine Alkisswani:

Good afternoon, everybody. I want to welcome you, it's great to have so many people here and interested in this topic. We're excited about it.

43:50

Thank you, Scott, for that thorough demonstration of the CMC Anchor Community Dashboard. Surely everyone now understands how we are verifying eligibility. And I'm sure they're all eager to have an opportunity to explore and make use of this dashboard on their own.

44:15

During the time that we were writing the rules for the CMC, we had several outreach conversations regarding the Pilot Program. We have met with umbrella organizations that represent the eligible entities for the program, and this includes NAFEO, AHEC, Thurgood Marshall College Fund, HACU, UNCF, and the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. I must not forget the session that was hosted by Johnson C. Smith University for members of the Carolinas Alliance for

Success in Education. Carolina's meaning North Carolina and South Carolina HBCUs. This organization hosted the meeting where the Minority Broadband Initiative was launched in 2019. We can't forget those partners. We take our partners quite seriously.

45:22

We believe in collaboration and we have all throughout BTOP with the launching of the MBI. And, as you well know, that was an important factor and has been an important factor for BroadbandUSA. So, we also met with representatives from the telecom industry, and the Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council, better known as MMTC.

45:52

And SHLB, the Schools, Health, and Libraries Broadband Coalition. We've met with CTN, the Community Tech Network and the National Digital Inclusion Alliance, as well as the US Distance Learning Association. So those that's a sampling, if you will, of our stakeholder outreach. We began this, as I said, when we were writing the rule, we will continue. We are continuing to do this. And we will continue to do this, to engage with our stakeholders, as we write, and as the NOFO is published, and with all constituent groups and stakeholders, and interested parties.

46:40

But right now, I'd like to share our responses to some of the questions that emerged, some of the points that emerged during our discussions. I think this will shed light on some questions you might have as you begin to plan and write proposals for the Pilot Program.

46:59

One of the first questions to emerge, have to do with what is meant by a pilot program? Well, I think right off, we need to say that this funding is \$248 million that was allocated for the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program was a one off. It was to establish a pilot program that would be proof of concept, if you will, for whether or not this is, indeed a program that the Administration, the Congress, would be interested in, and would learn lessons from this go around, as to whether or not it would be a program that will be funded as a part of NTIA's portfolio programs going along.

47:56

So, this Connecting Minority Communities Grant Program is a pilot program. It's funded under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021. That spending Bill included \$900 billion in stimulus relief with the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. And as I've just mentioned, \$285 million was allocated for the CMC.

48:27

I think it's fair to note, given this period that we've been in for a year and a half now, that the bill is an extension of the CARES Act with regard to

addressing the problems confronted by HBCUs, TCUs, and MSI's in general, in response to COVID-19.

48:49

I think we're all fully aware of, and recall all the issues and problems that schools encountered in terms of whether or not they were broadband ready, if you will, by terms of infrastructure on their campuses, like whether or not staff and students had broadband available in their residences, and even if they had it available, could they afford it?

49:16

And lastly, did they have equipment that allowed them to easily, one, take part as faculty in delivering distance education courses, and as students, allow them to meaningfully participate in those classes, such that their degree programs were not stunted, that they could take full part in their classes. So, this is the background, which it came about.

49:44

So, while the purpose of this program is explicit, namely, as has been stated to you, to provide grants for the purchase of broadband Internet access service or eligible equipment or hire and train information technology personnel to facilitate educational instruction and learning, including through remote instruction. That's the bare bones of what the purpose of the grant is. As a pilot program

50:19

It is incumbent upon each of you as grant applicants to provide a description of the problem that your institution seeks to address, and how the purposes of the grants program, namely the use of these technologies and services, will help to solve the identified problems. Identification and statement of problem is essential to how you then further develop an innovative approach to solving that problem using technology.

50:57

Since this is a pilot program, NTIA will be looking for innovative methods and solutions through identified problems that will serve as models, templates for replication, and that will be the basis for recommendations to the Administration.

51:18

Another point that emerged, if you've said all of that, and we've talked about that, what then would you advise that potential grant applicant to do in order to be best positioned to have a winning proposal?

51:42

Well, I think you all know right off the bat that we can't tell you what will be a winning proposal beforehand. But we can say, here are some tips and some guidelines for making it a competitive proposal.

51:58

First, of course, you must meet all of the eligibility requirements, but more importantly, does this proposal show how your institution is closing the gap left by CARES Act funding? Does it show how it will supplement Title Three and CARES Act funding? Have you come up with a creative, innovative way of partnering and developing consortia to implement your project? What problems has your institution faced as a result of COVID that are, indeed, a function of limited, or non-existent broadband access and how will this proposal solve that problem?

52:44

Please provide a clear statement of the problem. Clearly articulate a program description that includes a solution to the problem, including target population, anticipated outcomes, short-term outcomes, and plans for sustainability. Provide a clear implementation plan and include an evaluation plan. And, finally, give a detailed budget narrative that maps to your implementation plan.

53:23

I think if you're able to pull together all those elements in a clear and convincing manner, then it at least puts you in the ballpark of being competitive with respect to this grants program.

53:42

Now I did mention evaluation, but nonetheless, people have asked, will there be an evaluation and reporting requirement? How will NTIA effectively develop, track, and manage data collection, evaluation, and reporting materials?

54:02

I'll go back to the point of Pilot Program. Because this is a pilot program, evaluation and data collection, are essential to the overall success of the program. I might add, it's also essential to the overall success of each of your projects. There will be a bi-annual reporting requirement and a report due after the end of the grant period. Additionally, not later than 90 days after the end of the program, NTIA is required to submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives

54:53

A report that describes the manner in which the pilot was carried out, identifies each recipient that received a grant, and that contains information regarding the effectiveness of the Pilot, including lessons learned in carrying out the program. This includes successes, as well as barriers and constraints, evaluation reports, and end of the grant reports.

55:21

This will be the foundation for NTIA's reporting requirements. Just a side comment on that, quite often projects feel that it's not, not only is it not important, but then it might be detrimental to them, to report constraints that have been encountered or barriers to success. But let me go back to

the Pilot Program issue. It is important for us to learn from you from the field where are those barriers and constraints have been encountered, and how you've been able to solve them, or overcome them. Or which, which were the barriers and constraints that you were not able to confront, that remain? That should be around recommendations for further support, or how programs of this nature could be better structured. So, the reporting requirement is, is important from many facets.

56:30

Will NTIA focus on the best investments and the best projects to ensure and demonstrate success?

56:40

Well, we will focus on those that make the best case for the investment being made, and that supports, by their implementation plan, evaluation plan, and all documentation, that this is a project that that will ensure or is likely to ensure success.

57:02

We want to be able to support the development of stellar projects that can serve as templates for replication, and that will provide evidence of success that serves as a basis for recommendations to the Congress and this Administration for the future.

57:19

You might ask, why does she continue to stress the innovation, and best practices of the implementation?

57:27

I have to continue to stress those points simply because this is what will make the case for the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program to become instantiated as the Connecting Minority Communities Program within NTIA and for the services and benefit of communities across our nation.

57:55

Now, will satellite campuses, moving on to another point, will satellite campuses be eligible grant recipients?

58:02

Many colleges and universities have a collection of campuses. Now, the Department of Education attaches a program qualification to these institutions. Just as a reminder, we have used the Department of Education's eligibility matrix and criteria for establishing that first level of eligibility for our programs. So, the eligible institutions, satellite campuses will have a unique unit ID or an OPEID, and in that case, it will be eligible.

58:44

If it has its own organizational structure and administration and its own budget, then that satellite campus does qualify as an eligible recipient and will have its own 15-mile service radius boundary.

59:06

Another question having to do with application date. From the open application date to final announcement of awards, how long do you anticipate that this process will take?

59:20

Well, our preliminary estimation is approximately 90 days or less.

59:30

Is there a timeline for the use of the award money?

59:35

The NOFO will address this programmatic point in great detail, however, we anticipate a two-year period of performance. Several of you have been interested in whether or not there are similar programs for disadvantaged communities, but are not located near colleges or universities.

1:00:03

Well, I can easily say there are several other federal agency programs that support broadband programs, including ones that might be eligible programs for unserved communities that are near MSI's, and other institutions of higher education or that are in communities but are not located next to or near such institutions. But to find out more information about that, NTIA, through its BroadbandUSA website, on the resources federal page, does have a federal funding resource. FY 21, Federal Funding Guide in a PDF format that you can download, and there's an FY 21 Federal Funding Guide spreadsheet that you can also download.

1:00:59

NTIA, in collaboration with its federal agency partners, has developed this federal funding resource for you to be able to identify other such federal agency programs.

1:01:14

Now I'd like to give you a reminder. Since NTIA is soliciting volunteer reviewers, we're sure you'd like to know what the time commitment is for such reviewers. We anticipate reviewers will receive roughly 10 to 20 proposals to review over a two-week period. So, I expect that we will then convene a panel about 2 to 4 hours to facilitate final scores and to address specific reviewer concerns. We would expect that this will be the equivalent of about one week of time from each reviewer. We are, again, soliciting you and your stakeholder organizations to take part and volunteer and be reviewers for the Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program.

1:02:13

So, we hope that these points will be of help to you as you think about projects that you wish to develop. And I'd like to thank you so much for taking part in today's webinar. I'd like to know turn this back over to Scott for next steps.

Scott Woods:

1:02:32

So, thank you Francine for providing the overview of our outreach efforts and technical assistance plan as we move forward here, preparing for the launch of the CMC Pilot Program.

1:02:45

Good afternoon again everyone, my name is Scott Woods and I'm going to go through the CMC next steps.

1:02:51

So, as you all saw from earlier today, the CMC Final Rule has been published in the Federal Register as of June 15th. We're excited about that. As you are aware, the Consolidated Appropriations Act required us to go to Final Rule first to codify the CMC pilot Program. We've done that, you can access, you can review the Final Rule, understand all of our approaches and methodologies for eligibility, et cetera that we've just reviewed.

1:03:23

As Francine just talked about as well, we have a robust stakeholder outreach and technical assistance plan and so we look forward to working with all of you as we roll through in preparation for the launch of the CMC Pilot Program. Our next step is going to be a call for merit reviewers. And I'm going to ask Gilbert to come back and go into detail about our need for merit reviewers to launch the CMC Pilot Program.

1:03:53

So next steps are the approval and publication of the NOFO, the Notice of Funding Opportunity. So right now, we anticipate publication of the NOFO and opening of the application window by mid-August. We do have a draft in review. And so, it's going to probably be several weeks, not months, several weeks, before that NOFO will be approved and published. So, stay tuned for that. Our goal is, hopefully, by our next webinar, which we have scheduled, that will be on the release and the publication of the NOFO. That will have all of the information and details that you will need to apply for the CMC Pilot Program.

1:04:38

We're also going to invite our NIST counterpart, our NIST Grants Office, to our next webinar to talk about the grants and financial management requirements and the best practices. So, we can really start to plan for all of the requirements, the rules, the obligations from the NIST Grants Office, and Grants Officer perspective. And so, you will see NIST being involved as we move forward with our outreach, both on the public webinars, but as well as our outreach efforts as we move forward.

1:05:10

We're also, as you see in the Final Rule, we have to conduct the merit and program reviews for applications that are received. That's a necessary step that we'll be going through as well. And then, for those Pilot Programs that are accepted, you'll receive an official notification and acceptance from the NIST Grants Office. And that will contain a ton of grants documentation that you'll have to sign to begin the program. And then finally, we'll do a program launch, you will assign you a CMC Federal Program Officer, and a NIST Grant Officer that will help you adhere to all of the requirements and the protocols of the CMC Pilot Program.

1:05:53

So, we are really excited about releasing the Final Rule. We're really excited about releasing the CMC Anchor Eligibility tool, the Dashboard that will help you hopefully help you make some decisions about the work that you want to do. And again, just stay tuned for the next steps as we continue our outreach efforts, as we continue to inform you of the status and the launch of the CMC Pilot Program.

1:06:23

So, with that said, I'm going to turn it over to Gilbert, who is going to talk about, in a little bit more detail, our call for merit reviewers. Gilbert, I ask you to come back and discuss this with our audience. Thank you very much, everyone, and we look forward to working with you and providing more details in the future.

Gilbert Resendez:

1:06:46

Thank you, Scott. I will now discuss a little bit about NTIA's call for merit reviewers.

1:06:53

NTIA is seeking volunteers with broadband and digital inclusion expertise to serve as merit reviewers for all of NTIA's grant programs, including the CMC Pilot Program. I want to pause and say, now that the term merit review, or maybe something that people are unfamiliar with or new to them. And the position is very analogous to what, if you're coming from an academic background, is a peer reviewer or a blind reviewer of reviewing a paper before publication.

1:07:23

This is a critically important step for us in ensuring that we can award funds to the best applications possible. So, it helps us and helps you when getting award funds.

1:07:36

To apply to be a merit reviewer, please e-mail GrantReviewer@NTIA.gov with the following information on this screen. We anticipate that merit reviewers will begin in August and extend through October.

1:07:52

We are committed to ensuring that we have merit reviewers from a wide variety of backgrounds, and in diverse areas in the United States.

1:08:00

I also want to pause here and address a couple of questions that we've been getting from folks, and that is; if you're applying for NTIA grant funds, are you also able to serve as a merit reviewer? And the answer is yes. We have a number of internal checks and controls in place to ensure that individuals who are applying for grant funds, who are also serving as a merit reviewer, will not be conflicted out of receiving funds. If you have any additional questions related to that, you can also e-mail GrantReviewer@NTIA.gov. But I do want to assure people that applying to be a reviewer does not preclude you from receiving NTIA grant funds or for applying for NTIA grant funds and vice versa. And with that I would like to say thank you to both Scott and Francine for presenting today on our CMC Pilot Program.

1:08:49

I will now close this portion of our discussion and open up the webinar for our Q&A session.

1:09:10

All right. Thank You, Scott and Francine again. So, I know we have a number of questions in here. I've tried to group some of them so we can clip through a bit quicker because we are time limited today. The first one that I just wanted to address. I know we saw a number of questions in the chat, or in the Q&A box, on when the slides will be available?

1:09:31

We'll post the slides that we have today, a recording of this webinar, as well as the transcript to the BroadbandUSA website under Events-Past Events no later than June 30th, so please look out. Keep checking the website for more information, not only on this grant program, our other grant programs will be posting that information. I just wanted to address that right at the top of the Q&A session.

1:09:57

So, the first couple of questions I have are sort of programmatic question overview for you Scott or Francine, I believe, on the dial bridge. If they are already using the CARES Act to pay for broadband services for their students, can they still apply for our program?

1:10:18

Scott Woods:

Yes, thank you for that question. Yes, they can still apply for the CMC Pilot Program, but they would not be able to use CMC funds to pay for broadband services for their students because they are using other federal funds to pay for that same service. So, they would not be able to do that, but would be able to apply for the other programmatic uses under the CMC.

1:10:44

Gilbert Resendez:

Thank you. And then a question that I saw a few times in the Q&A box. Do we have a timeline right now for when the NOFO will be released, and will it go into greater detail?

1:10:56

Scott Woods:

Yes, thank you for that question. The NOFO right now, is tentatively planned for mid-August. So that's when we're planning to launch. And as many of you know, the NOFO has all of the guidelines, the details, that you will need to apply to the program. I'm happy to announce it's in review status the right now, but it takes some time for that to clear both our internal and external review process. But we are still on track for an August release, a mid-August release, hopefully, if not before, but we're definitely on track for that.

1:11:35

Gilbert Resendez:

Great. Thank you very much. Good to hear that it's in process. Next question, a set of questions are going back from our programmatic question.

1:11:45

If an institution had a grant award or an area had a grant award that would further subsidize the service area, proposed service area, such as RDOF, would that discount them from applying?

1:12:06

Scott Woods:

Not for RDOF. There are prohibitions, as I talked about in the previous answer to the question. There are prohibitions in the act for using federal funds for similar services that are paid for through another program. So, for example, if you knew or your student body were using emergency benefit funds from the FCC, you cannot use CMC funds to cover you, know, EBB recipients, broadband services. But again, in terms of an infrastructure standpoint, like RDOF, or USDA Reconnect Program. No, not from an infrastructure standpoint. This is not an infrastructure award program.

1:12:53

Gilbert Resendez:

You read my mind. The next question I had teed up here, can the funds be used for new construction projects and provide internet access?

1:13:01

Scott Woods:

So, that answer is no, so it's, it's not complicated, but again, CMC will not pay for any outside plant construction, any, you know, ground disturbance construction, outside of the school's campus. If there are some on-campus upgrades, if there are some on-campus connectivity, upgrades, equipment upgrades and even know perhaps some upgrades to existing facilities, you know, please make that case, but traditional outside plant construction, this program will not, will not cover that.

1:13:44

Gilbert Resendez:

Thank you very much and I think we've seen this question in a previous webinar too. But how is greatest unmet financial need determined? I know you gave, I think, pieces of criteria that you will use to evaluate it. Are they weighted in any certain way or is BroadbandUSA going to look at that holistically?

1:14:05

Scott Woods:

We will look at them weighted evenly. Again, we do understand that there's a challenge to at least readily get that, some of that information. We lay it out and then in the Final Rule and lay it out and also lay it out in the NOFO as part of our merit review process exactly how reviewers are going to use that information. But we're statutorily obligated to use greatest unmet financial need in our decision-making process and so the Final Rule does lay out our vision on how we plan to address that. And then we'll go into further detail about the merit review and the programmatic review processes in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.

1:14:49

Gilbert Resendez:

Got it. Thank you very much. This is an interesting question about eligibility of an institution, if an MSI-Minority Serving Institution does not fall in an eligible Census tract, but for proposes to serve the surrounding community that are within an eligible tract, are they still eligible to apply?

1:15:15

Scott Woods:

So, yes, they would be. Again, the anchor community eligibility determination is that 15-mile radius boundary. So, there must be an eligible Census tract or Census tracts plural in that 15-mile boundary. It doesn't mean that the school, the institution itself has to sit in one of those otherwise eligible Census tracts. It just has to have a Census tract or tracts in its 15-mile radius boundary for it to qualify.

1:15:49

Gilbert Resendez:

Thank you. I'm not sure if this question is for you or for Francine as well.

1:15:53

If there are multiple institutions of higher education in an area not qualified, for example, they're an HBCU, HSI, PBI, can they apply together if overlapping communities, using our tool?

1:16:08

Scott Woods:

So, yes, we plan to address this in our outreach. We do encourage consortia approaches, and we encourage partnerships. We're going to reserve to talk you through that in our outreach, so that's a really good question. We do know, in certain areas, there are more than one school that covers an area. And, again, we want to ensure equitable distribution and ensure that those schools can partner to address the needs. Not only of its students, but, also, in the surrounding communities that they serve. So, yes. Please reach out to us for outreach or for technical assistance. And, you know, being this a pilot program, we can have discussions with you

will walk you through again. No promises. But we can have a more proactive approach with our outreach and discussions with how to apply, how to structure certain aspects of the program.

Gilbert Resendez:

1:17:07

Thank you. If there are projects that are currently underway, will a participant wanting to apply, to have funds cover the currently underway project, would they be ineligible or does the project have to begin, after they apply and are awarded funds?

Scott Woods:

1:17:30

So that's a good question. I would ask you to reach out to us on that. You know my initial answer is, I don't know, and I take pride in saying that I don't want to give an unclear or untrue answer. Again, if a university, if an institution is, has started a project with its own funds but wanted to use the application to the CMC, to supplement that, or complete that, OK, let's talk through it again. I know the strict prohibited language is, we can't commingle, if you will, other federal funds for the same purpose. So, again, you know, US Department of Education Grant funding, NSF Grant funding, any of the FCC Grant funding for Emergency Broadband Benefit, et cetera. You can't use those funds if you're using those funds for similar purposes. But, again, we do have a very nice window here to do outreach and stakeholder engagement, before the NOFO comes out in mid-August. So, please do not hesitate to contact us, and we can walk through some of these scenarios with you.

Gilbert Resendez:

1:18:39

Thank you. Are we expecting to have a maximum grant amount or can you give an estimation of how many grants we're looking to fund or provide? I know it may be a little early.

Scott Woods:

1:18:54

It is. I mean, we're not going to prescribe to a minimum or maximum amount. Again, we do have certain programmatic mandates that were included in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, you know. But again, we want to, as a program, you know, ensure equitable distribution. We want to ensure that we did as many quality projects as we can, but we don't and will not prescribe to a minimum or maximum. I think in the NOFO we do say what the average award size may be. But, again, that's not determinative and that's not you know, we don't stick to that in terms of walking through and making those decisions as yet.

Gilbert Resendez:

1:19:41

Thank you very much. Then, can you speak a little bit what the deadline for proposal submission in an application window may be?

Scott Woods:

1:19:52

So right now, we've discussed, sort of, obviously, this is a pilot program. Obviously, this is new, we've discussed at 90-to-120-day application window. Again, that will be contained in the Notice of

Funding Opportunity, but I think institutions can feel very comfortable. At minimum, it'll be 90 days to about 120 days as the application window for projects to get their applications together and submit.

Gilbert Resendez:

1:20:28

Thank you. And then I had a technical assistance outreach question, if communities or an institution of higher education that meet our HBCU, MSI, or TCUs is looking to get in touch with you and the CMC team, how would they go about doing that?

Scott Woods:

1:20:47

You can contact us by the general e-mail, and you'll cover that on the last slide. They can also contact us by our individual e-mail addresses which are also on that last slide, as well. Send us an e-mail. We're also working through umbrella organizations like, AHEC AND HACU to make sure that we can get in touch with broad swaths of interested applicants and institutions across all of the designated category. So, right now, that's going to be our organizational priority, because we can reach more institutions that way. But, again, feel free to contact us directly via our e-mail addresses that will be on the last slide coming up here in a few seconds.

Gilbert Resendez:

1:21:43

Yeah, thank you very much. One interesting question to close us out. What is a service provider's role in the application process?

Scott Woods:

1:22:03

So, service providers can't apply. But, certainly, to the extent that they are providing service to an institution or a community or students and want to be involved in the solution, they can be. To the extent, the service providers, you know, want to be involved in, perhaps equipment, distribution or somehow improving on-campus connectivity. You have to work through the school to do that. But the Act is really specific on who the eligible recipients that, you know, the target recipients of, of the program are. So, service providers will not be able to apply directly to the program. But we do encourage them to work with the schools. You know, particularly if the school would like to use this opportunity to improve and address broadband connectivity and capacity on campus and to the students, and any consortium within the community as well.

1:23:07

Also, to add to that along with the NOFO, we will be also issuing questions, our standard, frequently asked questions with the NOFO, we received a lot of questions in the chat box, we've received a lot of questions to our e-mail inbox, we will do a FAQ list with the Notice of Funding Opportunity for those standard and routine questions that we can ask associated with the program. Again, I know people have also asked about re-sending the link to the chat. We had a little issue with the chat room there, but we did fix that and posted that in the chat, but it will be on

this slide as well, so you'll be able to link access to the CMC Anchor Eligibility Dashboard through the presentation as well.

1:24:01

Gilbert Resendez:

Great. Thank you, Scott, and then one last question to close us out.

1:24:07

I know you mentioned that in the tool, there is a statement on the methodology that we use, as well as in that Final Rule. If users are using the Anchor Community Dashboard and they're searching for an institution that they should be listed and have questions about that.

1:24:24

Can they reach out directly to BroadbandUSA@NTIA.doc.gov or where should they be directing those questions?

1:24:32

Scott Woods:

Yes, I think in the interim, they can reach out to us. As I mentioned in the presentation, there will be a process and there is a process that we outline in a NOFO for challenges. but in the Final Rule, we lay out exactly what our methodology is. We've link to all of the sources that we use. So, you know, to the extent that you're not reflected in that, you know, please feel or you have some reason to question the validity of that information, please contact us and let us know and we'll work with you to resolve that issue.

1:25:10

Gilbert Resendez:

Great, thank you very much Scott. And with that, I will close out our Q&A session for the moment. Now a few final slides to go over. A quick thank you, Scott, and thank you to Francine for spending a significant portion of your day today going over our Webinar.

1:25:27

So again, thank you to everyone who was able to join us today and for both who helped put together the webinar series. We have the recording for the past Broadband Infrastructure Program Webinar, Tribal Connectivity Program webinar, Connecting Minority Communities Pilot webinar on our website [BroadbandUSA](http://BroadbandUSA.gov), under Event-Past Event and you'll see it linked to the past webinars. It has the recordings, the slides, and the transcript.

1:25:59

The recording and transcript and slides for this webinar that you're watching right now will be posted in the same section on or before June 30th. We also have a webinar tomorrow for the CMC Pilot Program. That webinar will be the same webinar that you watched today, and it's another opportunity for Q&A.

1:26:18

If you have a question that you thought of last minute and you weren't able to ask it, you can always try tomorrow with that question. And now

we have the schedule below of our upcoming webinars for all of our grant programs. All of them start at 2:30 PM Eastern time.

1:26:40

Thank you to everyone for attending. If you have any questions, please e-mail BroadbandUSA@NTIA.doc.gov. The emails for Scott, Francine, and myself are also posted to get in touch with any one of us directly for whatever reason. We provided the website below for the CMC Anchor Community Eligibility Dashboard that got previewed and that web address is <https://broadbandusa.ntia.gov/cmcdashboard>.

1:27:13

And then, as a final reminder, the live recording and transcript for this webinar will be posted on our BroadbandUSA website on or before June 30th. That is all the final updates I had.

Thank you very much, everyone, for joining us this afternoon.

END TRANSCRIPT.