

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

Moderator: Gilbert Resendez
June 24th, 2021

Gilbert Resendez:

2:04

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.

3:14

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

3:24

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.

3:36

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.

4:20

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.

5:08

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.

6:00

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

6:05

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.

6:52

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

6:59

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.

7:34

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.

7:46

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

7:54

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.

8:27

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.

9:03

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.

9:55

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

9:59

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.

10:28

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.

11:14

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.

11:48

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.

12:15

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.

12:39

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.

13:13

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.

13:47

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.

14:25

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.

15:51

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.

16:42

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.

17:17

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.

17:49

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.

18:05

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.

18:34

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.

19:20

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.

20:08

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.

20:29

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>.

21:04

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.

21:21

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.

21:49

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.

22:27

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.

23:13

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.

24:52

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.

25:49

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.

26:05

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.

26:24

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.

27:14

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.

27:52

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.

29:08

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.

29:35

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.

30:12

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.

31:04

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.

31:26

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.

32:07

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.

33:02

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.

33:37

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.

34:57

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.

35:54

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.

36:10

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.

37:17

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.

38:12

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.

38:41

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.

39:35

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.

39:57

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.

40:16

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.

41:01

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.

42:11

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.

43:26

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.

43:41

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.

44:25

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.

44:35

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.

45:01

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.

46:08

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.

46:38

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.

47:26

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.

47:45

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.

48:42

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.

49:12

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.

49:35

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?

50:02

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.

50:30

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

51:05

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.

51:43

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.

52:04

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?

52:27

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.

52:43

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?

53:29

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.

54:08

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.

54:28

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?

54:48

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

55:36

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.

56:07

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.

57:15

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

57:25

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.

57:48

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.

58:05

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

58:13

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.

58:41

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

58:48

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.

59:29

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.

59:51

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?

1:00:05

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

1:00:15

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

1:00:21

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.

1:00:48

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.

1:01:44

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.

1:02:00

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.

1:02:59

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:

1:03:18

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.

1:03:30

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

1:03:37

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.

1:04:09

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.

1:04:38

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.

1:05:23

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.

1:05:56

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.

1:06:40

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.

1:07:08

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:

1:07:31

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

1:07:39

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.

1:08:09

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.

1:08:22

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.

1:08:37

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

1:08:46

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.

1:09:35

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

1:09:54

So, thank you again to Scott and Francine for spending time with us. I have a few questions from the Q&A.

1:10:04

Before we get started, I did want to note that there are some questions on if we will be sharing the slides with people and I just want to say yes, we'll be sharing that on or before June 30th. Please be checking the BroadbandUSA website to see when we will be posting that.

1:10:22

Before we get started with the other questions, Scott. I just wanted to ask; can you share a little bit about when we expect to see the NOFO posted? I know that usually goes into more detail than the Rule that we just posted. Is there anything you can share on that right now?

1:10:41

Scott Woods:

Yes, thank you Gilbert. Thank you for the questions from the participants. So, right now, the NOFO, The Notice of Funding Opportunity is under review. That's a fairly lengthy process. But we are on track for what we always thought was about mid-August NOFO release publication approval.

1:11:01

The NOFO will officially open up the application window. And, as I stated in the chat, we're planning for about a 90-to-120-day application window, but that will be officially set when the NOFO is published in the Federal Register.

1:11:18

Gilbert Resendez: Thank you for that. So, it sounds like the NOFO is the first peak that kicks off that timeline.

Scott Woods: 1:11:23
That it is, yes.

Gilbert Resendez: 1:11:26
Thank you for clarifying that.

1:11:28
We do have a couple questions on program structure and eligibility, so I'll start with those. So, one question I had, which was really interesting.

1:11:41
What is the Census tract eligibility when the 15-mile radius extends beyond a state boundary? For example, here in the DC area, Howard University is situated in Washington DC but the 15-mile radius around Howard extends into the District of Columbia, Virginia, and Maryland. Does the state boundary mean anything or is it inclusive of the Census tracts? Can you talk more about that?

Scott Woods: 1:12:06
Yeah, that's a good question and I answered that in the chat as well. That's a really good question. So, the anchor community boundaries are actually set by the 15-mile radius. And so, we don't take into consideration state boundaries for the anchor community determination. As you know, many schools are both in rural and urban areas and border other states. So, again, it's determined by the Census tract area, not the actual state boundary.

1:12:37
But if anyone has any questions, feel free to reach out to us directly. We consider the anchor boundary of the institution that 15-mile radius and that can, at times, cross state boundaries or other boundaries.

Gilbert Resendez: 1:12:53
Thank you. It was a great question.

1:12:56
The next question I have is; If a campus is not in an eligible tract that maybe qualifies as a HSI, HBCU, TCU, what have you: are they still eligible to apply for funding to improve on campus broadband for their students?

Scott Woods: 1:13:14
So, that's a good question. We got that question in the webinar yesterday. So, the institution does not have to be located in an otherwise qualified Census tract for anchor community determination. So, the answer to the question, it is yes.

1:13:30
The 15-mile anchor community boundary is for those consortia approaches where the school wants connectivity for students. As we all

know, a lot of schools, their students come from the surrounding area. That extends the possibility for them to do something, targeting their students that live in that 15-mile anchor community boundary. But, again, if the school was an eligible institution, it could under, as we outlined before, improve campus based broadband connectivity and access for students.

Gilbert Resendez:

1:14:06

Thank you. We received a similar question to this next one in yesterday's webinar, but this person asked; are eligible universities allowed to create group applications? For example, they used our HBCUs that may be in a similarly situated city. I know other Minority Serving Institutions find themselves in similar situations. So, could those universities group together for group applications if there is overlap in the communities they serve?

Scott Woods:

1:14:41

Yeah, that's a good question. We plan to address those in our outreach. The rules do call for consortia approaches involving tax exempt 501(c)(3)'s as well as a Minority Business Enterprise. We do understand that there would be a possibility that schools that are located next to each other could possibly coordinate and submit an application. So, I would just ask that they bring that up in our outreach efforts. So, we'll talk about that. Because the rules aren't totally clear on that now and I will readily admit that. That's something we'd have to address. Just by way the program is designed, we would hopefully not preclude that.

Gilbert Resendez:

1:15:27

Excellent, thank you, Scott.

1:15:31

This may be addressed in the NOFO, but the next question is: What is the maximum funding available for applicants and do we have any sort of insight on a range of award amounts or things like that at this time?

Scott Woods:

1:15:48

Yes, we did not set a minimum or maximum funding amount. Again, this is a pilot program and as Francine laid out, we are seeking innovative approaches to address the problem. So, we did not set a minimum or maximum funding amount. You will see in the NOFO, when it comes out, sort of average range. I don't want to preface that before it comes out, but there's no pre-determined minimum or maximum. So that's what all applicants need to be worried about.

Gilbert Resendez:

1:16:20

Excellent, thank you. This was an interesting question.

1:16:24

What specific devices, or broadband equipment, services, et cetera, are included if an institutional are eligible? For example, what are eligible expenses? I think that's what the question is getting at.

1:16:37

Scott Woods: So, both the Act and the Rule defines eligible devices which are pretty broad but to the question that was asked. It does include laptops and devices. I think there's a specific prohibition on mobile phones though that they would not qualify. Laptops, tablets, those devices would qualify.

1:17:04

Gilbert Resendez: Thank you. This was another question that came up in the chat and I thought was interesting. Would an economic development authority that serves minority communities, or qualifies under a Census tract in the region that it serves, qualify for this program?

1:17:26

Scott Woods: So that's a really good question, I know the person asked it several times. Again, the Act defines eligible recipients as the HBCUs, TCUs, and the different delineation of MSIs along with consortia with the Minority Business Enterprise and the tax exempt 501(c)(3).

1:17:47

So again, I think the EDA could work with the school to identify those Census tracts or those neighborhoods that would otherwise qualify, but the applicant to the CMC Pilot Program would have to be one of the eligible recipients as outlined in the Act that I just covered.

1:18:09

Gilbert Resendez: Excellent. Thank you. I think this is also a question that came up yesterday. Can a school system with multiple campuses apply under a common application or do they each have to submit separate application per institution? I think the University of Hawaii system, maybe Cal State system, falls into those buckets

1:18:31

Scott Woods: Yeah, that's a really good question.

1:18:33

I think for purposes of determination of the school location, whether it's independent or not, we go off of how that school reports to the Department of Education. If those campus locations are truly independent, then they would have to coordinate amongst themselves to determine who would submit an application for what impacted Census tracts or anchor communities they would serve.

1:19:01

If they are indeed not independent but have campus locations, but operate and report to one central campus organization, one central campus address, then that central school could submit an application for all of those impacted Census tracts in this application.

1:19:24

Gilbert Resendez: Excellent. Thank you. Then last, to close out today, it looks like I do have a couple of questions on the dashboard. The first question was: Do only

these anchor communities that are identified in the dashboard qualify to apply? Is there a challenge process, maybe an applicant thinks they do qualify but aren't reflected in that dashboard?

1:19:46

Scott Woods:

Yeah, that's a really good question. I think we covered that in the caveat. This is our application of the anchor community methodology, the eligibility requirement for the institutions of higher education. There is a challenge process or dispute process, if you will, that will be in the NOFO. So, if you believe the data presented is incomplete, inaccurate, or otherwise unavailable, there would be a process upon which where the applicant would have the ability to submit its own information to make its case of eligibility, not only for the institution, but for any Census tracts that would be impacted as well.

1:20:29

Again, it's laid out in the Rule. We use the 2020 Department of Education Eligibility Matrix for the five sub-categories of MSIs, or HBCUs, and TCUs, are legislatively mandated. Again, all of that methodology, our approach, or rationale, are all laid out in the Final Rule, but we will have, again, a challenge process in the NOFO. And so, applicants will have the ability to make their case.

1:21:03

Gilbert Resendez:

The last dashboard question that I see is: Can the data from that dashboard be exported?

1:21:10

Scott Woods:

Yes, I've responded to a couple questions in the chat. So, no, it cannot be exported from the dashboard, but if you recall from our previous May webinars, we did outline all of the independent, accessible, publicly available data sources and tables from the US Census Bureau, from the Department of Education, that individuals or schools can access and conduct their own analysis. There are also links and the Final Rule to those data tables and data sources, as well. But the data from this dashboard cannot be exported or otherwise downloaded.

1:21:52

Gilbert Resendez:

Got it. Thank you. I do see a couple of questions that just popped up into the chat so I will address some of those. We have a follow-up question to the question on eligible equipment. Does this also include cost of coverage for Internet connectivity at an eligible student's home or residence?

1:22:11

Scott Woods:

That's a really good question. So yes, if they are in the eligible Census tract, but we do have a prohibition. We have to ensure that that student recipient does not qualify or is not receiving another broadband benefit, like the Emergency Broadband Benefit from the FCC. So, the short answer is yes. But you would be precluded from using federal funds twice for that same student.

1:22:42

So, there would be a level check that we would have to do to ensure that student was not receiving some other discount program from the FCC or from another federal program like the Department of Education. So, but yes, CMC programming can be used to purchase discounted broadband Internet access services for students.

Gilbert Resendez:

1:23:11

Great, thank you. Are there any specific criteria for consortium applications? I know in the presentation we mentioned that a consortium needs to be one of the qualifying institutions of higher education, along with a Minority Business Enterprise, or tax-exempt 501(c)(3). Are there any other criteria that our applicants should be aware of?

Scott Woods:

1:23:34

No, whatever the application criteria will be, it's laid out in the Rule, in the NOFO. Again, as Doctor Alkisswani talked about, we're seeking innovative approaches. So, as part of our ongoing outreach to organizations were open to ideas. Again, this is a pilot program, and so we are seeking traditional and innovative ways to address the issue of connectivity for the impact that schools and the communities that they serve, and the students that they serve. So, I think in certain instances, we would only be limited by our imagination.

Gilbert Resendez:

1:24:15

Yeah, it sounds like there's a lot of creativity that can be built into these applications if wanted. Let's see here. Could broadband enabled monthly payment for telehealth be included as an eligible expense?

Scott Woods:

1:24:38

Yeah, that's a good question. I would have to hesitate to give an answer that specific right now. What I would say is contact us. We are conducting outreach and will be conducting pre-application technical assistance. In the NOFO we plan to have specific, concrete examples of what would be allowable, what funds could be used for various funding activities. So, I would say stay tuned for that as well.

Gilbert Resendez:

1:25:09

All right. Are there any limitations on which broadband providers can work with eligible recipients?

Scott Woods:

1:25:20

Not that I'm aware of, no.

Gilbert Resendez:

1:25:24

And then, can service warranties that provide redundancy and network sustainability be included?

Scott Woods:

1:25:33

That's a good question. I think, for campus-based connectivity to improve or facilitate connectivity, improve connectivity, increase access, I would

believe so, yes. That would be crucial to ensure that enhanced coverage or expansion of coverage. I do want to make it clear as well, we talked about this on the webinar yesterday, and that leads to another question. Outside campus-based, infrastructure improvements or ground disturbance construction activities are not included in this program and would be prohibited. But if a school institution would otherwise qualify, and wanted to address or through campus-based connectivity, upgrade equipment,

1:26:18

I had a question yesterday from a school who wanted to provide broadband connectivity to an entrepreneurship center or some type of revolutionary organization or functionality that it was building that that be included and that answer would be yes. Sorry to hesitate there, it's just a lot of information.

1:26:38

Gilbert Resendez:

Yes, it is a lot of information at once and a lot of nuances to each question. So, thank you. With that, I think we will begin our wrap up. I want to be mindful of everyone's time. If we didn't get to your question in the chat or on the call today, we are saving and we do have an archive. We will be addressing them in our FAQ section that will be posted to our website. And if you have any questions that have come up, you can always e-mail them to us at BroadbandUSA@NTIA.gov.

1:27:17

And with that, I think we have a couple of other slides to close us out. So, again, thank you to everyone for joining us on today's webinar. If you missed any of our webinars for either the Broadband Infrastructure Program, this, the Connecting Minority Community Pilot Program, or the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program, we have archived our first six. Those webinars are on our BroadbandUSA website under Events-Past Events. You'll see the webinar material and recording on there. This webinar along with yesterday's webinar and will be available on that section of the website on or before June 30th.

1:28:03

As always, you can always visit our BroadbandUSA website for more information. We'll have another Webinar for the CMC Pilot Program in July. And if you have any questions that come up, please e-mail our BroadbandUSA@NTIA.gov and we also have the e-mail addresses for Scott Woods and Dr. Francine Alkisswani, who was also on this webinar and myself. Additionally, we also have the link for the CMC Anchor Community Eligibility Dashboard Scott previewed on today's webinar.

1:28:35

With that, I just want to thank you everyone for attending and spending part of your day with us today and thank you, Scott. Thank you.

END TRANSCRIPT.