



Volume 5 | Issue 6 | June 2020



Policy Corner: BroadbandUSA Webinars Cover Digital Divide and Smart Tech

By Doug Kinkoph, Associate Administrator performing the delegated duties of the Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information

NTIA's BroadbandUSA team has been hard at work on our monthly webinar series. They continue to bring experts from across the country together to share their technical expertise. These webinars are valuable sources of information for local community leaders, business owners, and residents. They also serve as important avenues for state and federal officials to better serve the needs of their constituencies.

BroadbandUSA's [April webinar](#) engaged three different service providers on the challenge of connecting their rural customers to high-quality broadband. In May, our most recent webinar focused on how smart technology partnerships can be leveraged to transform entire regions. While the subject matter differs across these presentations, the central takeaways remain the same: community-level leadership is vital, and

partnering with business and government can unlock additional potential for success. I look forward to even more webinars and hope that you will join us in participating. Visit the [Events page](#) on our BroadbandUSA site to sign up for future webinars.

Broadband News and Updates

Federal News

- NTIA: [NTIA Updates Comprehensive Guide to Federal Broadband Funding](#)
 - [Request for Comment on World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly \(WTS-20\)](#)
- FCC: [FCC Proposes the 5G Fund for Rural America](#)
 - [FCC Opens 6 GHz Band to Wi-Fi and Other Unlicensed Uses](#)
 - [Chairman Pai Extends Keep Americans Connected Pledge Through June 30](#)
- EDA: [U.S. Department of Commerce Announces Availability of \\$1.5 Billion in CARES Act Funds to Aid Communities Impacted by the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)
- USDA: [USDA continues to make ReConnect award announcements](#)
- IMLS: [IMLS Grant Opportunities](#)
 - [IMLS CARES Act Grants for Museums and Libraries](#)
 - [IMLS CARES Act Grants for Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum and Library Services](#)
- ED: [Funding Digital Learning](#).
 - [Blog: Our students and families don't have a reliable way to get online; how can we help?](#)

State News

- [Uncertain Times Fueling a Shift in State Broadband Efforts](#)
- [The Pew Charitable Trusts Updates Its State Broadband Policy Explorer](#)
- Alabama: [Alabama Considers Potential Avenues of Broadband Expansion](#)
- Arizona: [Cisco to Install Public WiFi at Arizona Libraries](#)
- Arkansas: [State to Start Taking Grant Applications for Rural Broadband](#)
- California: [California City Outlines Wi-Fi Plan to Boost Connectivity](#)
- Georgia: [2020 Georgia Smart Communities Challenge](#)
- Illinois: [Illinois Announces Illinois Connected Communities Grants to Assist Communities with Expanding Broadband Access and Use](#)

- Maine: [Mainers Hope COVID-19 Pandemic Is Catalyst for Statewide Broadband Improvement](#)
- Minnesota: [Senate Approves \\$8 Million Broadband Expansion Funding Bill for Distance Learning](#)
- Mississippi: [State Public Service Commission Asks Wicker to Speed Up Broadband Funding Program](#)
- Missouri: [Piece by Piece: Missouri Rural Broadband Providers Work to Fill in Coverage](#)
- North Dakota: [How Local Providers Built the Nation's Best Internet Access in Rural North Dakota](#)
- Oklahoma: [In Rural Oklahoma, a Wi-Fi Hot Spot Brings a Dash of Hope and Excitement](#)
- Pennsylvania: [Co-op Schools Seniors on Internet as it Builds Out Broadband](#)
- South Carolina: [New Maps Spotlight Where SC Residents Have No Way to Access Internet](#)
- Vermont: [State Emergency Plan Would Expand Broadband to All Vermonters](#)
- Virginia: [Appalachian Power Receives Approval to Deliver Broadband Technology in Grayson County](#)
- Washington: [Crowdsourcing Our Broadband Access](#)
 - [Washington Counties Establish Free Public Wi-Fi Hot Spots](#)

Digital Inclusion

- [Chattanooga, Tenn., Recognized for Digital Inclusion Work](#)
- [School Districts Deploy WiFi-Equipped Buses to Expand Broadband Access for Students](#)
- [Spotty Broadband is Robbing Students of Their Education During COVID-19](#)
- [Fourteen local governments featured as 2020 Digital Inclusion Trailblazers](#)
- [50 Baltimore Orgs Are Joining Together to Close the Digital Divide](#)

Public Safety/FirstNet

- [FirstNet & Public Works: Restoring Lifeline Services in an Efficient Manner](#)
- [AT&T to Promote FirstNet with National Fraternal Order of Police](#)
- [Post-9/11 Public Safety Network Tapped for COVID-19 Response](#)
- [FirstNet, AT&T Begin Edging Toward 5G](#)
- [FirstNet Band 14 Coverage Serves About Half of U.S. Rural Population, FirstNet Authority Reports](#)
- [Three Ways FirstNet Enhances Patient Care for EMS](#)

General News

- [Under Social Distancing, Rural Regions Push For More Broadband](#)
- [Five Views on Rural broadband](#)
- [Call for Panels Open: Fall Smart Cities Connect Conference & Expo](#)

Lifeline Program Updates

- The US Department of Health and Human Services [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families \(TANF\)](#) Program offers States flexibility to fund access to computers and the Internet, using current year TANF funds. "A State may use Federal TANF funds or State "maintenance of effort" (MOE) expenditures to purchase computers, provide training and cover the cost of Internet access for eligible, needy families." Further information can be found in the [answer to question 11 in this Q&A](#).
- The US Department of Agriculture clarified that States may use [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs \(SNAP\)](#) Employment and Training (E&T) Program funds for laptops and other associated equipment such as Wi-Fi hot spots that a participant would need to access distance learning content if the SNAP E&T program is providing services virtually. See question [B5 in this Q&A](#) for further information.

June 17, 2020

BroadbandUSA Practical Broadband Conversations Webinar Series

Topic: [Utilizing Federal Data to Measure the Digital Divide](#)

Time: 2:00 PM Eastern

Federal data can help state and local leaders and businesses understand what drives broadband adoption and utilization in their communities and target the digital divide. Join BroadbandUSA's webinar on June 17, 2020 to learn about federal data sources, current trends, and where to access local information to inform your broadband efforts. NTIA will present the findings from their 2019 Computer and Internet Survey, the U.S. Census Bureau will highlight the broadband and connectivity data available in their American Communities Survey, and a representative from King County, Washington will showcase their data-driven dashboard developed using the available data.

Speakers:

- Rafi Goldberg, Telecommunications Policy Analyst, Office of Policy Analysis and Development, NTIA
- Tyson Weister, Program Analyst, Dissemination Outreach Branch, Center for Enterprise Dissemination (CED), U.S. Census Bureau
- Nicole Franklin, Chief Equity Officer, King County (WA) Information Technology (KCIT)

Visit our [Webinar Archives](#) for past presentations, transcripts and audio recordings.



NTIA's BroadbandUSA program promotes innovation and economic growth by supporting efforts to expand broadband connectivity and digital inclusion across America. In this role, BroadbandUSA serves state and local government, industry and non-profits that want to expand broadband infrastructure and promote digital inclusion.

Contact Us. If you are interested in receiving technical assistance, please email broadbandusa@ntia.gov or call 202-482-2048. For more information, visit our website at broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov.

Follow us online:  www.facebook.com/ntiagov

 www.twitter.com/ntiagov

 www.youtube.com/ntiagov

To be added or removed from the BroadbandUSA mailing list, please contact broadbandusa@ntia.gov