

**December 6, 2021 AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force
Teleconference Report**

Attendees

Steve Peters, Oris Friesen, Henry Goldberg, Mark Goldstein, Andrew Bevington, Melissa Boydston, Meredith Brewer, Kirk Busch, Erin Carr-Jordan, Michael Cohen, Rory Conaway, Jennifer DeChant, Lindsay Dietz, Michael Edmonds, Heather Floyd, Drew Garner, Lisa Gustinelli, Ian Hathcock, Holly Henley, Cindy Hogan, Shereka Jackson, Karina Jones, Debbie Kovesdy, Tarma Liranzo, Ilana Lowery, Derek Masseth, Sophia Mayberry, Clarence McAllister, Will McCullen, Mala Muralidharan, Jessica Novak, Mauricio Orozco, Cody Pedersen, Lea Marquez Peterson, Brian Petho, Laurie Prickett, Lourdes Rodriguez, Fernando Roman, Shannon Smith, Michelle Simon, Andy Sinclair, Roniyur Singh, Troy Smith, Jeff Sobotka, Nicole Umayam, Rachna Vas, Albert Velarde, Manny Villa, Joy Whiting

Task Force Sponsors; Kibitzing with Colleagues; Task Force Digital Inclusion Network, Arizona Digital Inclusion Directory, Seniors Digital Inclusion Initiative

Task Force Sponsors

Steve Peters again thanked Care1st Health Plan Arizona, Valley of the Sun United Way, the Satellite Broadcasting & Communications Association, and Kajeet for providing sponsorship funding for this task force. The sponsors are displayed on the task force website.

Steve is continuing to seek further funding support for the task force's upcoming work, and welcomes any organizations interested in becoming sponsors. He includes this request in his task force meeting announcements, and has posted a link on the task force website on how organizations can become a sponsor.

"Kibitzing with Colleagues" Sessions

Steve stated again that there are "Kibitzing with Colleagues" sessions held immediately after the Monday morning task force meetings, where task force participants can informally talk, share, or collaborate on any topics of interest. There is no agenda, no presentations, and no specified ending time for these sessions.

Task Force Digital Inclusion Network, Digital Inclusion Directory, Seniors Digital Inclusion

As discussed at previous task force meetings, Nicole Umayam (Digital Inclusion Consultant at the Arizona State Library), Cindy Hogan (Digital Inclusion Ambassador), and Shereka Jackson (CEO of Future Stars) are co-chairing the development of our task force's digital inclusion network. Nicole reported they had their first meeting last week to discuss what is being done,

issues practitioners are seeing to inform state planning, and getting devices out to those in need.

Also discussed at previous task force meetings, Nicole and Cindy have been working on preparing an Arizona Digital Inclusion Directory that will be posted on the Connect-Arizona website, which is intended to be a one-stop place where one can find any organizations doing digital inclusion work in the state (and will be searchable under various categories such as broadband adoption, devices, digital literacy, and digital learning). Nicole reported that the Connect-Arizona website is being overhauled, and once this is completed the Arizona Digital Inclusion Directory will be live.

Cindy Hogan reported that she is continuing to work on a seniors digital inclusion initiative with the Pima Council on Aging. The next meeting will be on December 10th.

Updates: State Broadband Director, AZ State Library, ADE and “The Final Mile Project”, Sun Corridor Network, ACC

State Broadband Director Update

Jeff Sobotka, State Broadband Director at the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA), reported on his recent activities.

Last week, Jeff attended the Navajo Nation Broadband Summit, which included county and state government representatives and service providers. They discussed various broadband solution options and the implications of the recently-passed federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. There is a massive E-rate project underway on the Navajo Nation that will provide E-rate funded fiber to their Chapter Houses, and will use 2.5 GHz wireless spectrum to connect to residences.

As reported at previous task force meetings, the ACA Arizona Broadband Development Grant Program launched on November 15th and information about it has been posted on the ACA website (www.azcommerce.com/broadband). The Arizona Broadband Development Grant Program (ABDG) provides \$100 million to expand high-speed broadband infrastructure to underserved areas of the state: \$75 million will be targeted to rural counties and \$25 million will be targeted to the urban counties (Maricopa and Pima counties). The deadline for applications is January 31, 2022. Jeff stated this gives sufficient time for organizations to complete their RFPs, select service provider partners, and submit applications. The ABDG will fund shovel-worthy projects, primarily focusing on last-mile infrastructure.

As reported at previous task force meetings, ACA engaged KPMG at the beginning of the summer to do an update of the 2018 state broadband strategic plan focused on middle-mile strategy for the state. Jeff said the KPMG report will be made public in early 2022 to enable maximum impact.

After the meeting, Mark Goldstein, Chair of the Arizona Telecommunications and Information Council, provided a one-page summary of federal broadband infrastructure funding opportunities. This is shown in Appendix 3.

Arizona State Library Update

Mala Muralidharan, E-rate Administrator for Public Libraries at the Arizona State Library, reported on her and Arizona State Library recent activities.

Arizona applied for \$144.3 million in E-rate funding this fiscal year, and has received about \$101.9 million in funding commitments so far. The FCC has put out a notice on proposed rulemaking regarding its proposal to implement a bidding portal through which service providers would be required to submit their bids to the E-rate administrator USAC instead of directly to school and library applicants. Mala commented that the current E-rate portal works well, and she does not see the need for a new bidding portal. The State E-rate Coordinators Alliance (SECA) and SHLB expressed concerns about this proposed bidding portal, such as creating more delays, conflicts with local procurement rules, and burdens for small applicants. Ian Hathcock asked if Mala has heard when the E-rate application window for this funding year will close, and Mala replied that she has not heard about this.

As discussed by Jeff Sobotka above, Mala reported that the Navajo Nation applied for \$53 million in E-rate funding to connect their Chapter Houses and for Headstart, and has been approved for this funding, with 95% of the funding coming from the E-rate program and 5% coming from the state. Mala noted that Fred Brakeman of Infinity Communications was the Navajo Nation's E-rate consultant who led their application. Ian Hathcock, Director of Sales & Operations for Smith Bagley dba Cellular One, commented that Cellular One was awarded the contracts to provide E-rate connectivity for 19 of the Navajo Nation sites. Holly Henley, State Librarian, noted that the Arizona State Library tribal library consultant (Mary Villegas) will provide training for the Navajo Nation on how to use their E-rate resources at their Chapter Houses for library purposes. Jeff Sobotka commented that this is a game-changer for the Navajo Nation, and he thanked Mala and the Arizona State Library for their work in enabling this E-rate award.

Arizona schools and libraries have received about \$104 million in cumulative FCC Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) program funding so far, including \$7.2 million in the most recent 5th wave of funding. The ECF funding supports schools and libraries in enabling home connectivity: provides funding for one device (laptop/tablet) per student and a hotspot.

The FCC Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) program has committed \$1.1 billion of the \$3.1 billion available. Arizona has enrolled 197,536 households in the EBB program, including 5000 in the last week. Households can enroll in the EBB program until December 31, 2021. As discussed at previous task force meetings, after that, the EBB program will be replaced by the Affordable Connectivity Program which is a long-term program (included in the Infrastructure Act) with \$14.2 billion in funding. The Affordable Connectivity Program will provide a \$30 per month benefit on Internet service instead of the \$50 per month benefit under EBB, and the monthly benefit for households on tribal lands will be unchanged at \$75 per month.

Mala noted that the telehealth in libraries pilot projects in Pima County are moving along, including planning for the health kit to be used, and they are hoping these pilot projects will go live in January 2022.

See Mala's written report in Appendix 1 for more details on the above areas.

ADE and "The Final Mile Project" Update

Sophia Mayberry, Project Manager and Technology Policy Coordinator in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction at the Arizona Dept. of Education (ADE), reported on recent

ADE activities, and Rory Conaway, CEO of Triad Wireless, provided a brief update on “The Final Mile Project”.

Sophia reported that the new ADE Office of Digital Teaching and Learning (ODTL), on which Chris Richardson (Acting CIO of ADE) delivered a presentation to our task force on October 4th, launched its survey of schools to assess their needs and biggest challenges. This assessment survey will guide the planning of ODTL. The survey will be open until December 15th for public and charter schools to complete, and they would like to hear from as many schools as possible. Sophia posted a link to this assessment survey in the Appendix 2 Chat. Sophia added that the ODTL currently has three employees and is operating.

Rory Conaway, noted at the November 29th task force meeting that Triad Wireless won five of the RFPs for the ADE Final Mile Project. They are targeting January 15, 2022 to have all five projects completed.

Sun Corridor Network Update

Derek Masseth, Executive Director of the Sun Corridor Network (SCN), reported on recent SCN activities.

As discussed at previous task force meetings, the middle-mile fiber deployment along I-17 and I-19 middle-mile is on track for completion by December 2022.

SCN is planning to establish a “neutral exchange point” in Flagstaff where the I-17 fiber can be connected to carriers’ equipment and fiber. A neutral exchange point is a facility with power and cooling that enable carriers to place equipment and facilitate connections to one another. Flagstaff does not currently have such a facility. In Phoenix (where the southern I-17 fiber segments run to), data centers can be used as exchange points. Yuma is another location in the state that may require an exchange point.

As reported at previous task force meetings, SCN is continuing to advance the Eduroam footprint to school districts across the state. Derek hopes that Pinal County schools will be live on Eduroam by the end of 2021. Eduroam is a wireless SSID that schools and libraries advertise on their networks to enable secure wireless network access for students and staff in various locations. Jeff Sobotka commented that SCN will be playing a bigger role for schools and community colleges in the future, and Eduroam is a service providing continuity for that.

ACC Update

Lea Marquez Peterson, Commissioner and Chair of the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC), reported on her and recent ACC activities.

Lea noted that the ACC’s Arizona Universal Service Fund (AUSF) reform to support broadband in high-cost rural areas (discussed at previous task force meetings) has been stalled. The AUSF will be on the agenda of the ACC’s January meeting – it will be discussed and there may be a vote related to it. Lea invites discussion with our task force on how the AUSF could be reformed, as was begun earlier this year by the task force, and will set up a meeting with Steve to consider this. Mark Goldstein commented that there is federal legislation proposed to reinvent the federal Universal Service Fund (USF) which funds FCC programs. Mala Muralidharan noted that the SHLB “US Forward” report (discussed at the September 27th task force meeting) considered how to stabilize the contributions carriers make to the USF, and proposed that broadband service providers also contribute to the USF in addition to the existing

landline providers. Mala included a description of this US Forward report in her Appendix 1 written report, and also put a link to it in the Appendix 2 Chat.

Lea participates in the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) Broadband Expansion Task Force. This NARUC task force discusses various states' broadband initiatives by their commissions, and Lea is exploring potential new ACC initiatives based on these which she would like to discuss with our task force. The NARUC task force has been considering how states will use federal funding for broadband as well as the promotion of the EBB & Affordable Connectivity Program. They have also discussed the broadband offices in different states, and Lea remarked she is happy Jeff Sobotka will be hiring an Assistant Broadband Director to assist him.

Lea stated that the ACC is also concerned with assisting coal communities as the economy transitions to clean energy sources. She noted that broadband availability in these communities is always considered a key aspect of this transition. Steve Peters commented that Chicanos Por La Causa is proposing digital inclusion as a key solution in their EDA grant application because many businesses have not made the digital transition. Kirk Busch, CEO of BigData Southwest, asked how Arizona stacks up against the rest of the country on transitioning coal communities and the role of broadband/digital inclusion. Lea responded that California tends to move faster than other states, but no state has yet figured out how best to transition coal communities and the role of broadband/digital inclusion in this. The ACC will be setting up a docket (online folder) to receive submissions on this topic, and there is a need for a much broader conversation with state officials on this. Joy Whiting, Apache County Schools Superintendent, commented that this is an important issue for Apache County. Jeff Sobotka commented that Page is looking to become Arizona's first "smart town" and re-invent itself as a tourist hub with their new fiber line, and Page and Apache County will be important locations in Arizona for finding good solutions to transition coal communities.

Arizona Department of Economic Security Presentation

Andy Sinclair, Community Action Programs Capacity Coordinator of the Arizona Department of Economic Security Division of Aging & Adult Services, delivered a presentation to the task force on the Dept. of Economic Security mission/activities and interest in partnerships/resources to help his organizations address the digital inclusion needs of the people they serve. Following is a summary of key points from the presentation, and the full presentation and meeting recording will be posted on the task force website.

Andy delivered a presentation on the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) "Poverty Reduction Tools". The U.S. poverty rate is 11.4% and the Arizona poverty rate is 13.5% (about 983,000 Arizona residents). Andy presented a chart showing the poverty rate in each Arizona county, and some counties have particularly high poverty rates: Apache County (33.4%), Navajo County (25.2%), La Paz County (22.1%), Gila County (21.1%), Graham County (20.1%), Yuma County (20.4%), and Santa Cruz County (18.8%).

DES provides funding to and works with 11 Community Action Agencies (CAAs) that serve all 15 Arizona counties to reduce poverty. Examples of these CAAs are: Maricopa County, Pima County, Western Arizona Council of Governments, Northern Arizona Council of Governments, and the Southeastern Arizona Community Action Program. CAAs work to address a diverse range of local needs through a comprehensive approach including partnerships with community organizations, and perform results-oriented assessments of their effectiveness. Through the Community Economic Development Advisory Consortium, Andy facilitates partnerships between

CAAs and organizations that are not commonly seen as fighting poverty (e.g. economic, workforce, and community development organizations, academic institutions, and utilities) and also broadband-related organizations.

The CAAs administer funds for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) that pay utility bills and rents to avoid utility shut-offs and evictions. The CAAs also administer funds for Community Service Block Grants (CSBG) that revitalize low-income communities and empower low-income families/individuals to become self-sufficient. CSBG funds are designed to be catalysts for further funding: for every \$1 of CSBG funding, CAA's leveraged about \$30 from federal, state, local, and private sources. An example of CSBG use is providing computers in libraries.

DES is participating in our COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force because 13% of Arizonans do not have access to high-speed Internet, which is required for education, health care, employment, transportation, and other purposes. The CAAs want to bring broadband to low-income communities, and are interested in partnering with community anchor institutions and broadband advocates on this. Andy works to get information out on how to get broadband to low-income individuals and communities, and wants DES to serve as a catalyst to accomplish this. He has invited Robert Alvarado of Chicanos Por La Causa to discuss how they have worked with our task force on broadband and digital inclusion.

Joy Whiting, Apache County Schools Superintendent, asked if DES does partnerships with agencies of the Navajo Nation. Andy responded that his division does not, but DES has a tribal lands division that works with them. Joy thanked the Arizona State Library for their E-rate work with the Navajo Nation, and said she would like to contact the DES tribal lands division.

Lindsay Dietz, Director of Program Services for the Arizona Alliance of Community Health Centers, asked if DES is partnering with community health centers. Andy responded that the DES disabilities division does work with community health centers, and he can provide a contact person for this. Andy added that Pima County has a CSBG for partnering with community health centers.

Steve Peters commented that Mauricio Orozco, Community Engagement Manager of Care1st Health Plan Arizona, may have synergy with DES. Mauricio responded that they do not have direction relations with Andy, but DES has over 40 different programs and Andy provides useful information on all these programs. Mauricio has worked with Wildfire, a statewide organization of community action agencies (see Mauricio's link to Wildfire in the Appendix 2 Chat).

Steve noted that Andy has been a regular task force participant, and DES is a good example of an organization that reaches a large number of people requiring digital inclusion support. Anyone interested should contact Andy to discuss how DES can support their needs.

Next Steps

The next AZBSN COVID-19 Digital Access Task Force overall meeting will be held on Monday, December 13th at 7:30 am.

Steve Peters discussed the schedule of task force meetings through the end of 2021. There will be task force meetings on December 13th and December 20th, and there will not be a meeting on December 27th for the holidays. The December 20th meeting will be an informal networking/kibitzing meeting with no agenda, updates, or presentation.

Mark Goldstein will deliver a next-generation wireless presentation to the IEEE Computer Society Phoenix Chapter this Wednesday, December 8th at 7:00 pm (see Mark's post in the Appendix 2 Chat to attend this).

Henry Goldberg and Oris Friesen will write up a summary report of today's task force meeting.

Appendix 1: Mala Muralidharan Report on: E-rate Program; FCC Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) Program: FCC Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB Program) and New Affordable Connectivity Program ; Universal Service Fund (USF) Contributions Reform

E-rate: AZ

Funding Commitment: USAC has released 33 waves of funding and AZ has received a funding commitment of \$101,882,348.43. No commitments in the last couple of weeks. Arizona applied for \$144,298,83.86 this e-rate cycle. Awaiting to hear about the rest of the applications.

NEW BIDDING PORTAL This Notice of Proposed Rulemaking would seek comment on a proposal to implement a central document repository, or bidding portal, through which service providers would be required to submit their bids to the E-Rate program administrator, the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC), instead of directly to applicants.

What the *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* Would Do:

- Propose to establish a bidding portal for E-Rate competitive bidding documentation and require service providers to submit bids to USAC through the bidding portal rather than directly to applicants.
- Seek comment on whether the Commission's rules should be revised to require applicants to provide other competitive bidding documentation that is not captured in the bidding portal (e.g., bid evaluation matrices, questions from bidders, etc.), as well as contract documents, at the time they submit their FCC Form 471 funding applications to USAC.
- Seek comment on any potential benefits and burdens the adoption and implementation of this bidding portal and these associated changes would have on E-Rate participants and the public.
- Seek comment on any E-Rate rule modifications necessary to effectuate these changes.

SECA (State E-rate Coordinators Alliance) and SHLB (Schools, Health, Libraries, Broadband Coalition) expressed concern that this would mean more scrutiny, more delays, challenges and conflicts with local procurement rules, more questions on bids that may be just random bots/promotions and a lot more. This will burden the smaller applicants even more as they have a hard time trying to login to one portal for E-rate with multiple authentication steps each time, and will put a lot more burden on the e-rate coordinators assisting these applicants. SHLB's e-rate group is hoping to get these questions in front of FCC to shape the NPRM (Notice of Proposed Rule Making).

ECF: Wave 5

More details about which schools and libraries will receive funding can be found at <https://www.fcc.gov/ecf-current-funding-commitments> .

State	Wave 1 Total Committed Funding	Wave 2 Total Committed Funding	Wave 3 Total Committed Funding	Wave 4 Total Committed Funding	Wave 5 Total Committed Funding	Cumulative Total Committed Funding
Arizona	\$38,742,438.05	\$35,405,728.11	\$8,590,123.45	\$14,127,582.95	\$7,214,239.57	\$104,080,112.13

Emergency Broadband Benefit: Total available 3.1 B. Total committed so far \$1.1 B. Still available \$ 2.0 B **197,536** Arizona Households have signed up for EBB. About 5000 households signed up in the last week.

Affordable Connectivity Program: a new long-term, \$14 billion program, which will replace the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program

What's Changing?

- The maximum monthly benefit will change from \$50 per month to \$30 per month for households **not** located on qualifying Tribal lands. The monthly benefit will remain at \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands.
- Households have new ways to qualify for the Affordable Connectivity Program such as: receiving WIC benefits or having an income at or below 200% of the [Federal Poverty Guidelines](#).
- Households that qualified for the Emergency Broadband Benefit due to a substantial loss of income due to job loss or furlough since February 29, 2020 or by meeting the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's COVID-19 program will need to requalify for the Affordable Connectivity Program.

You can [still apply](#) for the EBB! Households enrolled in the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program as of 12/31/21 will continue to receive their current monthly benefit during a 60-day transition period.

More information about actions current Emergency Broadband Benefit recipients will need to take to continue receiving the Affordable Connectivity Program benefit after the transition period will be available in the coming weeks.

The FCC is seeking comment on the changes enacted in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and will be adopting rules for the Affordable Connectivity Program. You can view the public notice here: <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-21-1453A1.pdf>

USF CONTRIBUTION REFORM:

USForward: Analysis of USF Contributions Reform

The SHLB Coalition joined **INCOMPAS** and **NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association** to release [USForward](#), a research report by **Carol Matthey** on how to stabilize the contributions mechanism for the Universal Service Fund (USF). Over the last two decades, the USF contribution factor has risen dramatically, calling into question the sustainability of E-rate, Rural Health Care, and the other USF programs.

Fortunately, USForward proposes a realistic and effective solution: **Expanding the existing revenues-**

based contributions base to include revenues from broadband internet access. If the FCC pursues this option, the report projects that the contribution factor would significantly decrease and remain under 4 percent over the next several years. [USForward: FCC Must Reform USF Contributions Now - An Analysis of the Options | SHLB Coalition](#)

Appendix 2: Chat from Zoom

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (7:34 AM)

[file: US Federal Broadband Funding Opportunities 2021-2024 Summary V01A.docx]

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (7:34 AM)

I just took a crack at summarizing all the current and pending U.S. Federal Broadband Infrastructure Funding Opportunities on a single tight page, eight primary opportunities with a bullet each. If there's a few minutes to spare, I'll share and give an overview as well as ask Henry and Oris to include in the meeting minutes.

Rory Conaway to Everyone (7:38 AM)

Please include rory@triadwireless.net if that is appropriate.

Melissa Boydston, VSUW to Everyone (7:39 AM)

@Mark - so helpful! Thank you!

AZ State Mala to Everyone (7:39 AM)

Fred Brakeman of Infinity Communications is the Project lead for the Navajo Nation E-rate project for AZ and NM

Erin Carr-Jordan to Everyone (7:39 AM)

Congratulations!!!!

Drew Garner to Everyone (7:39 AM)

Congrats!

Kirk busch to Everyone (7:39 AM)

CONGRATS Jeff!

Shereka Jackson to Everyone (7:39 AM)

CONGRATUALTIONS JEFF!!

Joy Whiting to Everyone (7:40 AM)

congratulations

Shannon Smith to Everyone (7:40 AM)

Congratulations!

Andrew Bevington to Everyone (7:40 AM)

Big Congrats, Jeff!

Roniyur Singh to Everyone (7:40 AM)
Congratulations!

Mauricio Orozco to Everyone (7:40 AM)
Congratulations Jeff!

Melissa Boydston, VSUW to Everyone (7:40 AM)
Wow! Congrats Jeff! ❤️

Clarence McAllister to Everyone (7:40 AM)
Congrats 🎉

Sophia Mayberry to Everyone (7:41 AM)
Sorry I am late. I had some tech issues.

AZ State Mala to Everyone (7:48 AM)
fbrakeman@infinitycomm.com

AZ State Mala to Everyone (7:49 AM)
Mary Villegas State Library - Tribal Consultant working on the training

Debbie Kovesdy to Everyone (7:49 AM)
That was a great group. We are looking forward to planning as well. Deb / GenTech

Sophia Mayberry to Everyone (7:51 AM)
Assessment Info Link: <https://www.azed.gov/technology/odtl/opportunity-assessment>

Karina Jones to Everyone (7:51 AM)
yes three employees for Office of Digital Teaching and Learning and growing!

AZ State Mala to Everyone (7:54 AM)
Derek, let me put you in touch with Mark Cesare the library IT Head.

Meredith Brewer to Everyone (7:54 AM)
What you mean by facility?

Will McCullen to Everyone (7:56 AM)
<https://internet2.edu/are-you-ready-for-the-new-eduroam/>

Derek Masseth to Everyone (7:57 AM)
@Mala, that would be great!

Will McCullen to Everyone (7:57 AM)
<https://eduroam.org/>

Derek Masseth to Everyone (7:58 AM)

@Meredith, if that question is for me. A facility of this nature is a building with power, cooling, and pathway which enables providers to place equipment and facilitate connections to one another. Very common in markets like Flagstaff.

@Will, thanks!

AZ State Mala to Everyone (8:04 AM)

USForward: FCC Must Reform USF Contributions Now - An Analysis of the Options | SHLB Coalition

AZ State Mala to Everyone (8:05 AM)

The SHLB Coalition joined INCOMPAS and NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association to release USForward, a research report by Carol Matthey on how to stabilize the contributions mechanism for the Universal Service Fund (USF). Over the last two decades, the USF contribution factor has risen dramatically, calling into question the sustainability of E-rate, Rural Health Care, and the other USF programs.

AZ State Mala to Everyone (8:06 AM)

<https://www.shlb.org/policy/research/USForward>

Nicole Umayam to Everyone (8:06 AM)

That's an important point, Lea

AZ State Mala to Everyone (8:08 AM)

USForward report:

[https://www.shlb.org/uploads/Policy/Policy%20Research/SHLB%20Research/FINAL%20USForward%20Report%202021%20for%20Release%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.shlb.org/uploads/Policy/Policy%20Research/SHLB%20Research/FINAL%20USForward%20Report%202021%20for%20Release%20(1).pdf)

Mark Goldstein to Everyone (8:09 AM)

I delivered a Next-Gen Wireless Overview & Outlook Briefing to the PhxMobi Emerging Tech Festival on Saturday, 11/13/21 exploring the next-generation wireless landscape with its underlying emerging technologies, protocols & standards, market trends & opportunities available to view/download on SlideShare at <https://www.slideshare.net/markgirc/phxmobi-nextgeneration-wireless-overview-outlook-briefing-111321> FYI. I'll be offering a more in-depth 2+ hour version of this talk to the IEEE Computer Society Phoenix Chapter virtually this Wednesday, 12/8/21 at 7:00 PM. More info and free registration at <https://r6.ieee.org/phoenix-cs/> FYI.

Heather Floyd to Everyone (8:12 AM)

Mark I appreciate you sharing your upcoming presentation, I shared the slide deck with my IT/Broadband Manager who will be attending your IEEE presentation this Wed.

Andrew Bevington to Everyone (8:13 AM)

Thank YOU, Steve!

Kirk busch to Everyone (8:13 AM)

Andrew - Sharika should be able to help ?

Rory Conaway to Everyone (8:15 AM)

May I get a copy of this presentation Andy?

Steve Peters to Everyone (8:17 AM)

Rory it will be distributed to everyone with the minutes of the meeting

Rory Conaway to Everyone (8:20 AM)

Thank you.

Mauricio Orozco to Everyone (8:22 AM)

DES services umbrella- <https://des.az.gov/services>

AZ State Mala to Everyone (8:28 AM)

Andy is doing a great job in promoting EBB. Yeah Andy!

Mauricio Orozco to Everyone (8:32 AM)

<https://wildfireaz.org/find-help/community-action-agencies/>

Appendix 3: Mark Goldstein Summary of Federal Broadband Infrastructure Funding Opportunities (referenced in Appendix 2 Chat)

U.S. Federal Broadband Infrastructure Funding Opportunities

The pandemic has brought with it a historic wave of federal recovery funding for economic stimulus and infrastructure investment, with a tsunami of new broadband funding in the pipeline to the States, territories, and Tribes as well as directly to community and provider projects. These current and emerging broadband infrastructure grant funding opportunities (complemented by digital equity program funding) include:

- In March 2020, the **Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act** was signed into law, the third major legislative initiative to address COVID-19 following the **Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act** and the **Families First Coronavirus Response Act**. Though targeted to a variety of specific purposes, the states have significant discretion in program development and funding with many having committed substantial amounts to broadband projects and purposes. Leftover CARES funds may be used by states to offset matching requirements under some of the new broadband funding programs.
- The **USDA ReConnect Grant Program** currently in Round 3 provides funds for the costs of construction, improvement, or acquisition of facilities and equipment needed to provide broadband service to rural areas without sufficient broadband access. ReConnect can accommodate larger, multi community deployment opportunities, though with significant matching obligations. \$1.15B is available for grants, loans, and combo funding with applications due by February 22, 2022. See <https://www.usda.gov/reconnect>
- The **USDA Community Connect Grant Program** is likely to soon reinstate with an additional funding round. Grants are for up to \$3M requiring ≥15% matching

and are limited to a single contiguous area thus good for smaller, single community projects. See <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-connect-grants>.

- The **NTIA Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP)** recently closed a \$980M application window on September 1, 2021, but the recently enacted Infrastructure Bill has allocated an additional \$2B likely to roll out much sooner due to being an established program and protocols. TBCP provides up to \$50M funding to eligible tribal entities for broadband infrastructure deployment projects, including construction of middle mile and last mile networks and interconnection, as well as up to \$2.5M for broadband affordability programs, digital inclusion and adoption efforts. Cost sharing or matching funds are not required and a provider subgrantee may own and operate the resultant infrastructure. See <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/resources/grant-programs/tribal-broadband-connectivity-program>
- The **U.S. Treasury's Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (CCPF)** provides \$10 billion of Covid-19 Economic Relief allocating \$106-540M to each state & territory and \$167K to each Tribes to carry out critical capital projects that directly enable work, education, and health monitoring, including remote options for Broadband Infrastructure (prioritizing investment in $\geq 100/100$ Mbps fiber projects), Digital Connectivity Technology, and Multi-Purpose Community Facilities. States, territories, and Tribes need submit their requests for their allocations then their plans, and will roll out grant programs and projects starting in 2022. See <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/capital-projects-fund>
- The recently enacted **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act** includes some \$65B in direct broadband allocations in its **Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program** including \$42.5B to state block grants likely to roll out starting 2H 2022 primarily as competitively awarded subgrants to projects in priority unserved areas ($\geq 80\%$ of households lacking 25/3 Mbps service) followed by underserved areas ($\geq 80\%$ of households lacking 100/20 Mbps service) broadband availability. See <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/3684/text>
- BEAD also funds a new **NTIA Middle Mile Program** with \$1B for projects providing high-speed backbone for communities, businesses, and anchor institutions with a focus on increasing redundancy/reliability and improving affordability starting 2H 2022 and requiring 30% matching funds.
- The **U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA)** has current funding opportunities using \$3B provided the agency in ARPA. Funds are available through six distinct challenges, with separate goals and application processes/deadlines for each, several of which are appropriate for broadband purposes as one form of supported community infrastructure and programs investment. See <https://eda.gov/programs/eda-programs/>
(V01A)

Appendix 4: Registration Information for Attendees at Today's Task Force Meeting

First Name	Last Name	Organization	Job Title	Email	Phone	Mobile
Melissa	Boydston	VSUW	VP	MBOYDSTON@VSUW.ORG	6026314800	
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