

Arizona State Library eRate Report

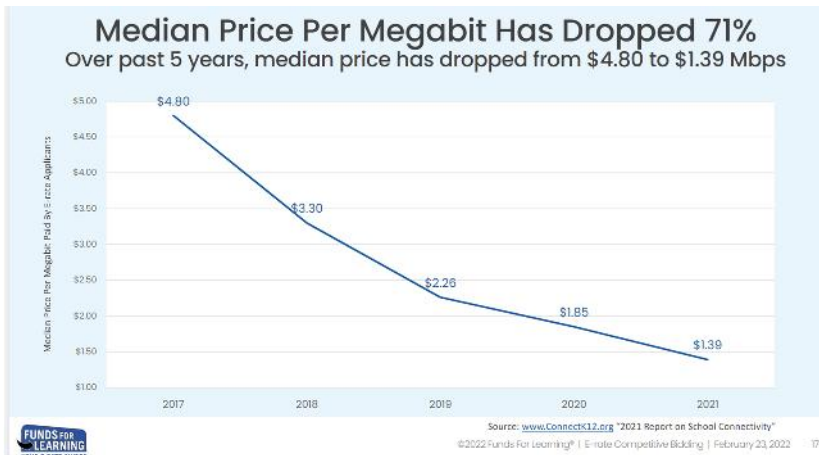
AZBSN 3-8-22 – Mala’s notes

1.E-rate: Goal is Improve Infrastructure - Connectivity and Bandwidth – Internet available and affordable

-) Application deadline for 2022-23 is March 22
-) Working with the public libraries in getting their Applications submitted
-) Navajo Nation Chapter Houses fiber build out is going in full swing. On going supply chain issues, Right of way and environment clearances, Pole replacement, older buildings.

FCC BIDDING PORTAL FOR E-RATE

-) Notice of Rule Making is out Comments are due on or before March 28, 2022, and reply comments are due on or before April 27, 2022. ALA, SHLB, and several organizations are filing their comments. (see earlier minutes for summary of all comments received so far). State E-rate Coordinators’ Alliance (SECA) is preparing a request for a 30 day extension of the due date for filing initial comments in the Competitive Bidding NPRM. Our members are consumed right now with assisting applicants with their competitive bidding processes and filing Form 471 applications to meet the March 22 deadline. A one week interval after the 471 deadline does not provide adequate time to write meaningful and substantive comments.



Average Price Per Access Point Dropped 49%

Over past 5 years, average price has dropped from \$1,414 to \$716 per WAP



Source: E-rate Manager*

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50% Drop in Non-Contracted Services

A record low 3.2% of requests in 2021 were based on month-to-month prices



- Month-to-month services typically come with the highest unit prices.
- Fewer month-to-month agreements results in lower prices.



Source: E-rate Manager* (excludes requests for voice services)

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2. Emergency Connectivity Fund: 7.1 B 2 rounds of applications for Libraries and Schools to apply for Hot Spots and Devices to loan out to patrons. On February 23, 2022, the FCC announced another \$86 million in ECF funding to support students and library patrons. The Commission indicated that, since its June 2021 launch, the ECF program has committed over \$4.62 billion supporting all 50 states, Guam, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the District of Columbia. The FCC also noted that, the latest funding commitments will support over 240,000 students and provide funding for over 350 schools, 29 libraries and 8 consortia, which are approved to receive over 239,000 connected devices and over 96,000 broadband connections. Approval of applications are ongoing. 10 waves have been approved so far. Total Commitment Approved for Arizona so far is **\$ 134,866,417.90**.

FCC has granted the Request to Extend Emergency Connectivity Fund a week ago. The new service delivery deadline is June 30, 2023.

3. EBB Emergency Broadband Benefits Program NOW ACP Affordable Connectivity Program

The Affordable Connectivity Program is an FCC benefit program that helps ensure that households can afford the broadband they need for work, school, healthcare and more.

EBB- ACP Transition 10 M households have signed up so far.

- J **EBB recipients fully enrolled as of December 31, 2021 will automatically continue to receive their current monthly benefit of \$50 until March 1, 2022.** After the transition period ends on March 1, 2022, the monthly discount for all legacy EBB participants not located on qualifying Tribal lands will be reduced to \$30.
- J **Most Emergency Broadband Benefit households will not have to take any action** to continue receiving the new \$30 monthly benefit after March 1, 2022.
- J If out-of-pocket costs has increased as a result of the reduced monthly benefit amount, your service provider will contact you to let you know if you need to take any additional steps in order to continue to receive an Affordable Connectivity Program benefit.
- J Households located on qualifying Tribal lands will continue to receive a \$75 monthly benefit and will not need to take any action to continue receiving the Affordable Connectivity Program benefit.
- J *Contact your provider if you are concerned about a possible increase in your monthly service bill or are interested in changing to a different service plan.*

For more information on the transition, you may contact ACPinfo@fcc.gov.

4. Telehealth Project: NO Updates yet ... Pima County Ajo and Arivaca libraries. Great location for pilot. They are not close to a hospital, past the border security check points and sparse home.

- J Partnering with NAU, UofA Southwest Telehealth Outreach; County Public Health department.
- J Ordering Backpack Kits (BP Cuffs, Thermometer, weigh scale, Glucometer, Ipad etc) that will be used in taking vitals and if needed connecting to the patron's health care. \Ensuring that patrons who do not have connectivity can still be monitored by their Health Care provider.

5. National Digital Navigator Corps, NDIA received a \$10 million grant from Google.org to help advance digital inclusion in rural and Tribal communities. Over the next four years, this grant and the National Digital Navigator Corps it supports will have a wide impact on the thousands of people who will benefit from the work on the ground and a long-lasting impact on digital inclusion: supported with a \$10M grant from Google.org.



More Details the program and sign up to get National Digital Navigator Corps updates at <https://www.digitalinclusion.org/digital-navigator-corps/>

If you work on rural and/or Tribal lands/Indian Country, NDIA wants to stay connected with you! They will be selecting 18 partner sites nationwide. For now, see

Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act Grants -

Jeff Sabotka mentioned how complex this grant is . It dwarfs all previous grant programs combined, so there is going to be a lot of money coming to every State. What is still to be determined is how States will administer these grants – and there will be differences. But the legislation provides enough detail for communities and ISPs to start looking at how to be positioned for these grants. Congress has asked NTIA to establish the rules. NTIA has requested input from stakeholders.

Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act (the IIJA) law appropriates **\$42.4 billion to the new Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (or “BEAD”) Program**. Legislation outlines the following

-) **States will get at least \$100 million** each, with **the rest distributed based upon the number of unserved households in each state**. This is a good time to remind those who think that the lousy FCC maps don’t matter that **the States with the worst FCC maps are going to lose funding**.
-) The states must follow several crucial steps before funding is provided.
-) **As expected, grants must adhere to two key definitions of broadband. Unserved are places with broadband speeds under 25/3 Mbps. Underserved are areas with speeds between 25/3 and 100/20 Mbps.** Grants must first go to unserved areas before being used for underserved areas. Funding for anchor institutions is only to be considered after serving underserved areas.
-) **Grant projects must provide speeds of at least 100/20 Mbps**, but faster broadband speeds must be given priority. States must give priority to grants that are deployed in counties with **persistent poverty**. **Projects that are shovel-ready will be given priority**. Projects that pledge to pay Davis-Bacon wages will get priority.
-) States will likely not award all of the grants immediately, and **the Act asks states to provide a 5-year plan for the use of the funds**.
-) Grants don’t have to all go for broadband to unserved and underserved areas. **States can use the money for data collection, broadband mapping, and planning**. Funding can be used to bring low-cost broadband or WiFi to qualifying multi-family apartments.
-) Unlike the recent NTIA grant program, BEAD doesn’t give priority to any class of grant recipients. The grants can’t exclude cooperatives, nonprofit organizations, public-private partnerships, private companies, public or private utilities, public utility districts, or local governments from eligibility – but none get a preference.
-) There is a challenge process where incumbent ISPs can challenge the validity of a grant area. Interestingly, the NTIA can override States in these challenges.
-) **Grant applications must provide at least a 25% matching** for the cost of the project. **Matching funds can include CAREs funding and ARPA funding** – so hang on to those funds for a while! Matching can also come from **state grants**.
-) Deployed technology must only meet two 9’s reliability, meaning that a network can be out for two days per year and still be considered adequate – that’s a low standard for the industry.
-) Grants must cover every home in a grant coverage area within four years of receiving the grant.
-) Grant recipients must provide **at least one low-cost broadband option for eligible households**. The NTIA is expressly forbidden to regulate rates in any manner.
-) Interestingly, any fiber built along highways must include access points at regular and short intervals. This money is not for middle-mile fiber.
-) Grant recipients must carry out public awareness programs in grant areas extolling the benefits of better broadband.
-) There is plenty of paperwork. Grant recipients must file semiannual reports tracking the effectiveness of the grant funding.