

2023

ANNUAL REPORT

February 2024



SHLB

SCHOOLS, HEALTH & LIBRARIES
BROADBAND COALITION

A WORD FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

Dear SHLB Community:

We are on the cusp of solving the digital divide and simultaneously on the brink of disaster. How could this be?

Congress allocated \$65 billion for broadband two years ago, and President Biden has vowed to connect everyone by 2030. The main federal agencies are working together to ensure efficient deployment, and every state and territory has submitted detailed broadband plans. The FCC is supporting three initiatives to promote WiFi on school buses, hot spot lending, and cybersecurity. Thanks to SHLB's advocacy, the FCC's Rural Health Care program has improved significantly. There is much to celebrate!

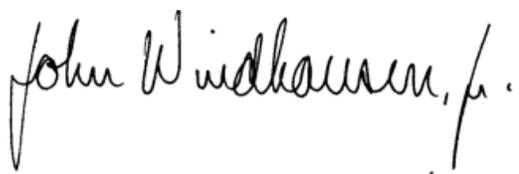
And yet . . .

- The ground-breaking Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) will both run out of funding later in 2024. Over 22 million households are at risk of losing their Internet if these programs are not extended.
- Pole attachment delays and disappointments could undermine the broadband deployment plans of awardees. While the FCC's December 2023 poles Order cleared up a few open issues, the Order does not tackle the key issue of pole replacement costs.
- Congress is considering legislation that would auction licenses for the lower 3 GHz band instead of making some of this valuable spectrum available for unlicensed and shared use.
- The Universal Service Fund (USF) is being challenged in court, and the FCC shows no signs of fixing the funding mechanism to preserve the long-term viability of the USF.

Despite these challenges, we have made great strides toward our goals of solving the digital divide one anchor institution at a time. Schools and libraries are also leading the way in deploying innovative wireless technologies using CBRS mesh WiFi or TV white spaces. State broadband officials have done a remarkable job of mapping the anchor institutions in their states to ensure they receive the gigabit service they deserve. Our annual AnchorNets conference in 2023 was a huge success, featuring speakers from the White House and various federal agencies.

On the operational side, SHLB has hired three excellent staff people last year, and our productivity and impact are growing stronger every day. We plan to launch a new website and management software in 2024 to upgrade our services.

Our success starts with our members, who are serving their communities and providing most of SHLB's financial support. SHLB is proud to serve as the "anchor institution watchdog" over these broadband efforts to make sure that policymakers recognize the value of our nation's schools, libraries and healthcare providers in promoting internet access for all. Whether you're a SHLB member, a donor, or part of our community, your patronage is what makes our work impactful. Thank you for your continued support.



John Windhausen Jr.
Executive Director
SHLB Coalition



Cindy Aden
Chairperson of the Board of Directors
SHLB Coalition

WHO WE ARE

In the 21st Century, affordable, high-quality broadband access is a non-negotiable necessity. And yet, millions of people cannot use the internet due to a lack of infrastructure, unaffordable prices, and other barriers. That's where we come in.

The Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) public interest organization founded in 2009. We believe that by supporting and leveraging the resources, expertise, and local knowledge of community anchor institutions, our nation can end the so-called digital divide once and for all. From our home base in Washington, D.C., we work closely with policymakers and fellow public interest groups to turn our vision of a connected America into a reality. Our hundreds of members include a wide range of anchor institutions and organizations who support our mission and help us develop practical and effective policy recommendations.

OUR MISSION

SHLB advocates for policies and programs that enable anchor institutions to obtain and promote open, secure, high-quality broadband services to support connectivity and opportunity for all.



Community Anchor Institution (n.):

A nonprofit community organization such as a school, library, hospital, health clinic, community center, higher education institution, public housing building, house of worship etc. CAIs often need high-capacity broadband and facilitate greater use of broadband by vulnerable populations, including low-income residents, unemployed individuals, students, and older adults.

OUR STAFF



John Windhausen Jr.
Executive Director
Joined 2009



Kristen Corra
Policy Counsel
Joined 2022



Eric Fredell
Membership Director
Joined 2020



Kristen Engebretsen
Chief Operating Officer
Joined 2023



Saskya Cabral
Marketing and PR Director
Joined 2023



Lauren Rachuba
Operations Manager
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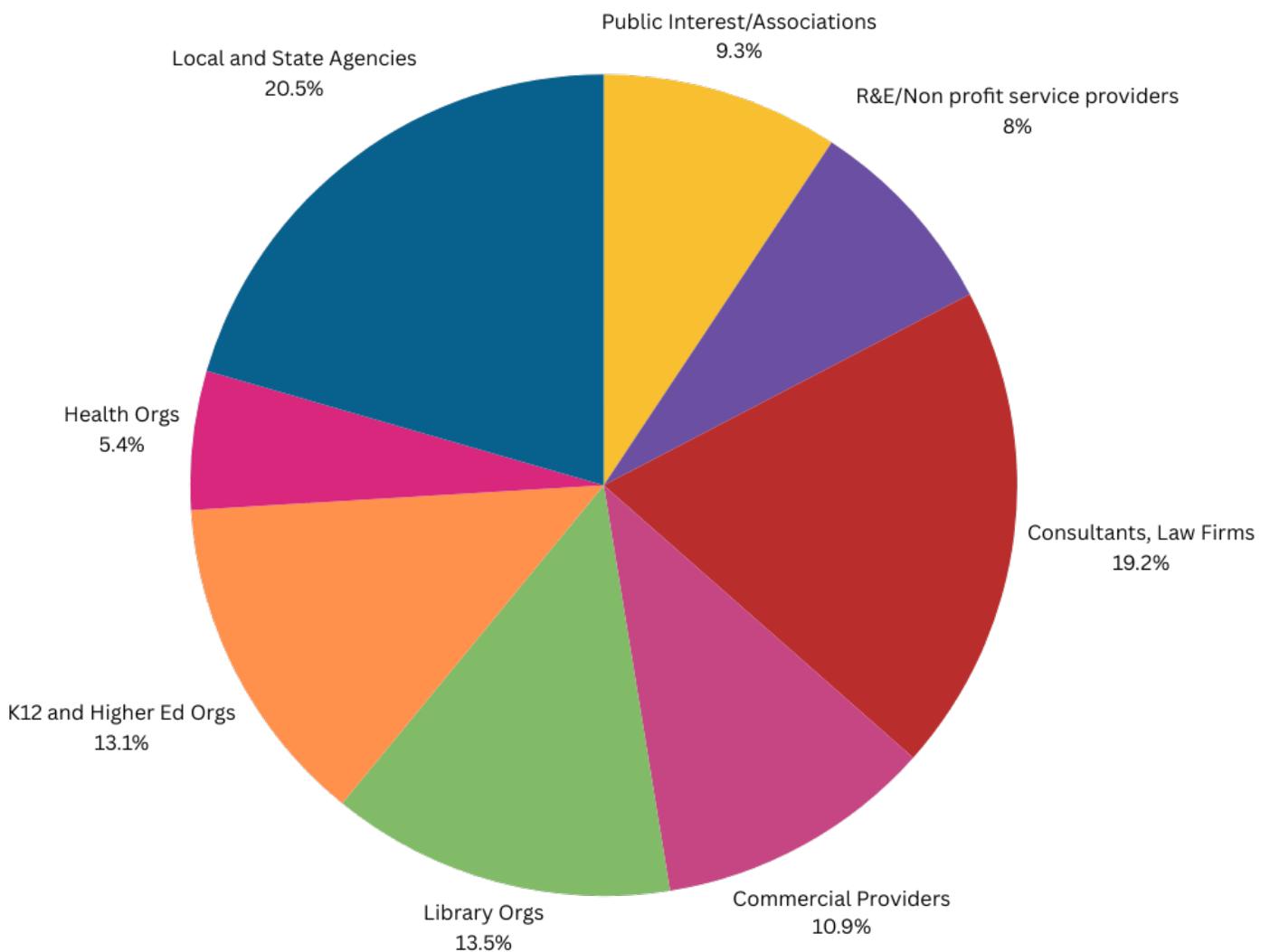
OUR MEMBERSHIP

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS AND DIVERSITY

In pursuing its mission, the SHLB Coalition works with a diverse group of organizations from across the broadband ecosystem. Organizations that become members support the SHLB mission and benefit from SHLB's leadership and advocacy on numerous broadband policy issues. SHLB members work together to identify and shape broadband policies that recognize and strengthen the vital role of anchors in making broadband accessible to all Americans. SHLB's advocacy benefits from the diverse and real-world viewpoints of its members, enabling SHLB to develop policy recommendations that are realistic, effective, and commercially-viable.

MEMBERSHIP BREAKDOWN

In 2023, SHLB totaled 320+ members. The Coalition is based in almost all US states, except North Dakota.



APPLY TO BECOME A MEMBER TODAY

OUR POLICY GROUPS

Given the broad range of topics impacting community anchor institution broadband, SHLB members have the opportunity to participate in our five monthly policy groups. In 2024, each group offers members a chance to grow their expertise and contribute to SHLB's advocacy on a deeper level.



E-Rate



Digital Equity



Wireless



Broadband Deployment



Rural Healthcare

We thank the 2023 Chairs of each policy group for volunteering to make these groups possible, as well as every member who joined the discussions.

Julia Legg, E-Rate Central
Kristen Corra, SHLB
Marci White, Redbud Telecom Consulting
Lesley LaFile, Independent Health Network
Ashley Hitt, Connected Nation
Jenny Miller, EducationSuperHighway

Michael Calabrese, OTI/New America
Phil Neufeld, Fresno Unified School District
MacGregor Obergfell, Association of Public and Land Grant Universities
Joan Wodiska, Pioneer Management Consulting
Tom Reid, Southern Ohio Health Care Network
Kara Reibold, Petrichor Broadband, LLC

[LEARN MORE ABOUT SHLB'S POLICY GROUPS HERE](#)

ANCHORNETS 2023

Our 11th Annual Conference attracted attendees from across the country including anchor institutions and all levels of government. Thank you to everyone who helped make the event a success.



...AS TOLD BY THE ATTENDEES

“Wouldn’t dream of missing it!”

“Full of great speakers, topics were all relevant.”

“SHLB is a wonderful organization, and unsurprisingly, it draws an interesting and thoughtful group of attendees and panelists to its conference. I enjoyed the people I met at the conference and learned from them.”

9 out of 10 attendees said they were highly likely to tell a friend or colleague about AnchorNets.

2023 BIG WINS

USF COURT CASES

In 2023, several petitioners challenged the constitutionality of the Universal Service Fund (USF). SHLB intervened to support the FCC and defend the USF. By the end of 2023, three appellate courts ruled in favor of SHLB, affirming the USF’s constitutionality. Petitioners continue to file legal challenges, and SHLB also plans to defend the FCC’s decision to allow E-rate funding for Wi-Fi on school buses.



RURAL HEALTHCARE

SHLB appreciates the FCC’s 2023 Order, which improved the Rural Health Care Program. Notably, it introduced conditional eligibility for health-care sites planning to become eligible for funding. The FCC also accepted SHLB’s recommendations, including adjusting SPIN change deadlines and allowing healthcare providers to modify evergreen contract dates. These changes enhance healthcare access and outcomes in rural areas. SHLB actively engaged with the FCC through comments, reply comments, and a meeting in December to express support for the FCC’s Order.



POLE ATTACHMENTS

In 2023, SHLB met with the FCC to emphasize the need to adopt a defined timeline for make-ready adjustments for large broadband projects over 3,000 poles and to improve self-help options by pole attachers. SHLB also urged the FCC to address how costs should be allocated when a pole needs to be replaced to accommodate a new attachment.



LETTER OF CREDIT

SHLB participated actively in a coalition that convinced NTIA to relax the letter of credit requirement to allow more minority and women-owned businesses and community-owned networks to apply for BEAD funding. In November of 2023, NTIA issued a “programmatic waiver” of the letter of credit obligation in the BEAD program. This essentially grants SHLB’s waiver request, signed by 47 other SHLB members and submitted in August, 2023.



ECF EXTENSION

In April 2023, SHLB asked the FCC to extend the service delivery deadline to June 2024 for certain applicants that received funding from the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF). The FCC granted SHLB’s request in part, allowing many applicants additional time to receive equipment and provide services to students in need.



EDUCATING OUR COMMUNITY

In addition to public interest advocacy, the SHLB Coalition strives to be a reliable information source for all things related to anchor institution broadband. We keep our members up to speed via biweekly calls and an exclusive listerv. In 2023, we held a total of eight webinars to explore every broadband policy issue ranging from ECF to ACP to BEAD and beyond. On average, over 200 attendees tuned in for each discussion. Here are a few highlights:

WEBINAR HIGHLIGHTS

Lessons Learned from ECF to Enhance E-Rate

Speakers discussed the challenges and successes of ECF and how those can be transferred or avoided in the ongoing E-Rate program.



CLINT ODOM



MISTY HAWKINS



RUSS SELKEN

Exploring the Role of Anchors in ACP Enrollment

This webinar featured the unique approach of three organizations in addressing ACP enrollment challenges & tips to increase participation



ROBERT BRANSON



JENNY MILLER



BILL HERMAN

Do Anchors Hold the Key to BEAD's Success?

This webinar explored the potential role of anchors in advancing connectivity to the unserved & underserved through the BEAD program.



ANDREW BUTCHER



CLAUDE AIKEN



JOSEPH SAWASKY

THANK YOU!

SHLB can't reach a lofty goal like "internet for all" without some incredible supporters (like those of you who have read all the way to the final pages of this report!). While we lack the space to thank everyone who helped us pursue our mission in 2023, please know that we appreciate and value every SHLB member, every sponsor, and every donor.

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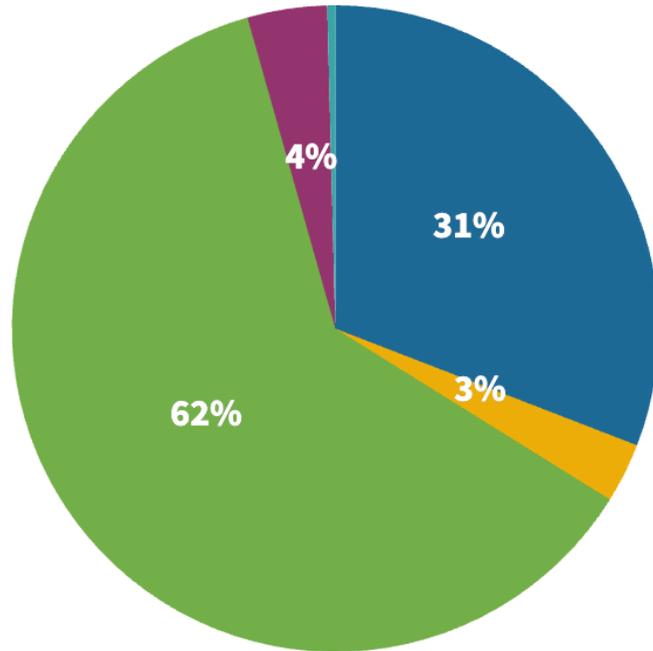
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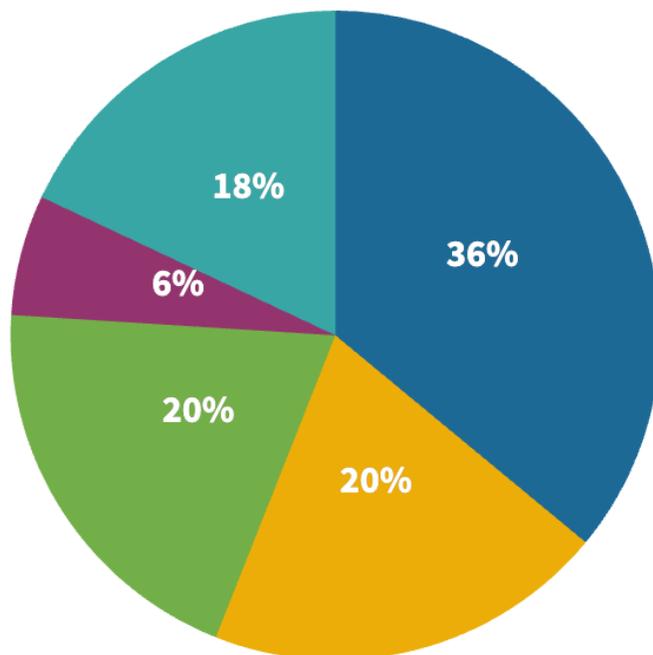
OUR FINANCIALS

Behind every effective nonprofit, there is funding of some sort. The SHLB Coalition receives financial support primarily from membership dues and events, as well as donors and sponsors. *N.B. While SHLB does accept funding from commercial organizations, we function with independence and always act in the best interest of our mission.*

2023 REVENUE



2023 EXPENSES



WE APPRECIATE YOU!

We are thankful for broadband for bringing us together, and can't wait for an even better 2024!



Thanks for reading. If you appreciate SHLB's work, let us know with a donation!

[DONATE NOW!](#)