HOW COMMUNITY ANCHORS PROMOTE BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT AND ADOPTION

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Mission and Membership

SHLB advocates for policies and programs that enable anchor institutions to obtain affordable, secure, high-quality broadband services that are open and accessible to the surrounding community.

Membership is open to any organization that supports our Mission. Membership benefits and dues available at www.shlb.org/membership.

#1: BEAD NOFO: "STRONG PREFERENCE FOR CONNECTING ANCHORS"

"Eligible Entities [States] that demonstrate they will be able to ensure service to all unserved and underserved locations will be free to propose plans that use remaining funds in a wide variety of ways, but NTIA underscores its **strong preference** that Eligible Entities also ensure deployment of gigabit connections to community anchor institutions such as libraries and community centers that lack such connectivity."

(BEAD NOFO p. 7)

Anchors are not just an afterthought.

#2: ANCHORS HELP TO CONNECT THE UNSERVED, AND SUSTAIN THEM.

If you are building a network to an unserved community that includes anchors, it would be uneconomic/wasteful to by-pass the anchors.

- Connecting the anchors at the same time as the households increases the long-term economic sustainability of the network.

- Anchor institutions can serve the role of an "anchor tenant" on the network, contributing revenues that will make it easier for the grantee to offer affordable broadband to households.

#3: THE 80/20 RULE.

Applicants for BEAD funding must demonstrate that at least 80% of the service area consists of unserved locations.

Anchors can be served with the remaining 20%.

BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY THROUGH FCC PROGRAMS

How has the FCC's Learn Without Limits Initiative impacted broadband connectivity for the community?

NEW PROGRAMS UNDER FCC'S LEARN WITHOUT LIMITS INITIATIVE

School Bus Wi-Fi

Declaratory Ruling clarifying that the use of Wi-Fi on school buses is eligible for E-Rate funding

Hotspot Lending Initiative

Report and Order making Wi-Fi hotspots and Internet services eligible for E-rate program support for libraries and K-12 schools.

Cybersecurity Pilot Program

$200 million, 3-year pilot program to fund cybersecurity resources to schools and libraries. Goal is to assess a future (permanent) funding structure.

SCHOOL BUS WI-FI

Item: FCC Declaratory Ruling & Eligible Services List

Timing: Adopted Oct. 2023 / ESL Dec. 2023

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FCC'S LEARN WITHOUT LIMITS INITIATIVE

School Bus Wi-Fi Declaratory Ruling

- The use of Wi-Fi, or other similar access point technologies, on school buses is an educational purpose and the provision of such service is eligible for E-Rate funding

- Excludes occasionally-used chartered buses (e.g., used for school field trips), municipal and city buses generally used for the transport of non-students, and other types of school-owned, leased, or contracted vehicles (e.g., vans and cars)

- Can only enable connections during a school bus's normal operating hours or when there is a clear educational purpose for enabling school bus Wi-Fi outside of these hours – must turn off during other times

HOTSPOT LENDING INITIATIVE

Item: FCC Report & Order

Timing: Adopted in July 2024

FCC'S LEARN WITHOUT LIMITS INITIATIVE

Hotspot Lending Report and Order

- Allows schools and libraries to apply for E-rate funds to help offset the costs of purchasing Wi-Fi hotspots and Internet services to loan to students, school staff, and library patrons for off-premises internet use.

- Aimed at closing the "Homework Gap"

- Continues the successful efforts established under the Emergency Connectivity Program, a pandemic-era inspired program

- Various program financial safeguards

BEYOND TRADITIONAL HOTSPOTS

SHLB asked for **technology neutral rules**

- Don't limit funding only to traditional mobile devices/services

Schools and libraries might want to deploy **their own wireless networks** where traditional hotspots are inadequate.

- Positions schools and libraries to fund projects that better connect their communities (equipment with stronger signal strength)
- Potentially more cost-effective over the long run

Funding – Suggested benchmarking device and service costs associated with anchor-enabled networks against traditional mobile hotspot options.

ANCHOR-ENABLED WIRELESS NETWORKS

INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE WIRELESS EXTENSIONS FROM ANCHOR INSTITUTIONS TO THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY.

("TO AND THROUGH")

Research report and cost model written by Dr. Raul Katz issued in August

Finds that schools partnering with WISPs can connect households much cheaper than distributing hot spots.

Jointly sponsored by SHLB and OTI/New America.

ANCHOR-ENABLED NETWORKS

East Moline School District 37

Partnered with SmartWAVE Technologies to purchase access points and placed them on top of existing infrastructure like streetlights.

All students are given a Chromebook, which then automatically connects to the network wherever they are situated.

Unlike traditional hotspots (where the provider controls the network) East Moline's network allows the district much greater control; the IT department can control network access, diagnose problems, and "see" how the network is running and being used.

Boulder Valley School District

Partnered with a small local wireless ISP (WISP), LiveWire Networks, Inc. and provides space on school building roofs.

LiveWire constructs towers on these roofs with fixed wireless access points that transmit wireless internet using the 3.5 GHz (CBRS) spectrum band. The APs connect to subscriber modules – small receivers that are placed on the student's dwelling (such as the roof or patio).

LiveWire operates and manages the network and performs installation and other services directly at the home.

Empowering all social good organizations

Broadband Services

We provide affordable, reliable, and secure access to the country's largest and largest and fastest 5G network.

Social Impact & Philanthropy Philanthropy

We reinvest surpluses from our telecommunications spectrum resources in resources in grant funding and impact investments.

Empowering your mission.
Enhancing your impact.

Our cutting-edge devices and services are tailored for tailored for education institutions, libraries, nonprofits, and social welfare organizations.

mission
TELECOM

Our Offerings

Fixed Wireless Internet

Boost your organization with fast, reliable 5G internet, offering seamless connectivity without the need for cables.

Mobile Hotspots

Stay connected on the go to what matters most with affordable, secure and robust 4G and 5G mobile hotspots.

Account Management

We provide a dedicated support team to manage devices, administer data filtering, and produce reporting.

Connected Laptops

Ensure a seamless, secure, and high-speed connection on the go, eliminating reliance on Wi-Fi or hotspots and minimizing connectivity interruptions.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)

Easily switch your existing compatible devices to our premium, unlimited data plan.

FCC E-Rate Hotspot Order

- Approved at July Open Commission Meeting

- Allows E-Rate funding to reimburse schools and libraries for the cost
  of mobile hotspots

    – Does not include fixed wireless, cable, fiber

- Sets a device and service price limit

CONSUMERS' RESEARCH 5ᵀᴴ CIRCUIT COURT DECISION

What's next?

- 5th Circuit found that the delegation of taxing authority to the FCC violated the Constitution.

- Court remanded rules to the FCC (but did not vacate the rule).

- 5th Circuit decision conflicts with 6th and 11th Circuit cases which found USF to be constitutional because it satisfied the SCOTUS "intelligible principle" test.

- FCC will likely open proceeding to take back some authority from USAC

- Supreme Court may take up the case to resolve the conflict.

- FCC must issue quarterly contribution factor in September.

- USF funding should continue to flow in short-term.

THANK YOU!

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