# State Connections

The broadband working group for state legislators

First Friday of Every Month 4:00 ET / 3:00 CT / 2:00 MT / 1:00 PT

WE WILL BEGIN SHORTLY!

# **Agenda**

Recording meeting

### **NCSL**

- Summit Recap
- USF Resolution

### **BEAD**

- Initial Results
- How to Support your State?

### **State Updates**

- How can we help?
- Legislative Initiatives

# NCSL - Legislative Summit

Janie Dunning, State Connections Coordinator

## Recap: NCSL 50th Legislative Summit, Aug 4-6 in Boston

- Good attendance from State Connections
- Good one-on-one conversations
- Broadband panel ft. Rep. Ryu, Del. Linville, Janie Dunning, and others
- USF resolution passed

Thank you to NCSL and State Connections members!

# NCSL - USF Resolution

State Rep. Stacey Travers (AZ)

### Resolution

- USF is critical for public safety, resilience, economic growth, innovation, and closing the digital divide.
- NCSL urges Congress to modernize USF programs and funding system.

#### Vote

Adopted unanimously

TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND DEBATE RESOLUTION WHEREAS, the ability to access and maintain secure, reliable, affordable high-speed internet is essential to the success of our Country; to our families, our businesses, our WHEREAS, we must evolve to reflect a 21st-century digital reality. The benefit of 'ublic safety and resilience - advanced networks improve emergency nic growth and innovation – enhanced broadband access fuels local business growth, remote work, STEM education, and telehealth, and upgrading numbers grown, remove work, or an endudation, and the properties of infrastructure boosts U.S. competitiveness in the global digital economy: Bridging the digital divide – access to new technologies is uneven, leaving WHEREAS, this transformation is not just a technical upgrade, it is a necessary step toward a more inclusive, connected, and competitive society; and HEREAS, today, digital inclusion depends not just on basic connectivity, but on robust, high-speed, and scalable internet infrastructure; and WHEREAS, a modernized infrastructure can prioritize and ensure all Americans can fully participate in digital life; and WHEREAS, Congress recognized the importance of universal service as a cornerstone Friences, congress recognices are anyonarice or universal service as a contensione of the Communications Act of 1934, requiring incumbent telecom providers to serve all WHEREAS, Congress created the Universal Service Fund (USF) in the WHENEAS, Congress created the Universal Service Fully (COF) in the Telecommunications Act of 1996 to ensure continued support for universal service in a /HEREAS, the USF, while created to ensure affordable access to telecommunications for all Americans, is increasingly outdated in the face of rapidly evolving digital WHEREAS, the USF continues to rely heavily on declining revenues from traditional telecommunications services, and its funding mechanisms and focus areas—primarily

## **BEAD - Updates**

Gigi Sohn & Drew Garner – Benton Institute

#### **BEAD Status**

- All locations back on the table
- States redo programs with "tech neutral" + "lowest bid wins" rules
- Deadline Sep 4th

### Early Results – VA, LA, WV

- Fiber still main winner (so far). Satellite wins have increased.
- Costs are lower (maps have shrunk)
- Starlink aggressively challenging results

#### Your State is Next!

Most states will publish plans on or before next Thurs (8/28)

# **BEAD - Advocacy**

Gigi Sohn & Drew Garner – Benton Institute

## Why Your Support Matters

- Your broadband office is making key judgement calls
- But NTIA retains final say
- Broadband offices need stakeholder support

## The Letter Says

- Express support for the state's plan
- Call on NTIA to approve plan quickly

The Honorable Howard Lutnick Secretary of Commerce U.S. Department of Comme 1401 Constitution Ave NW Washington, DC 20230

### RE: Support for [State] BEAD Final Proposal

We, the undersigned group of [description], write to express our strong support for the [State Broadhand Office's] Final Bernard under the Broadhand Emity Acons and Dendument We, the undersigned group of [description], write to express our strong support for the groadband Office's Final Proposal under the Broadband Equity. Access, and Deployment of the Group o GEAD) Program, submitted on [date] to the National Telecommunications and Info

I reflects a thorough and responsive effort by the state to implement the NTIA's June The proposal reflects a morougn and responsive error by the state to implement the NIIA's June 6, 2025 Policy Notice. By aligning closely with this guidance, the State Broadband Office has a standard and a standard to be standard and a standard standard standard and a standard stan 6, 2025 Policy Notice. By argining closely with this guidance, the Matter Broadband Office has crafted a plan that is both technology neutral and cost-effective. At the same time, it sets for the account of the same time, it sets for the same time, it is set to the same time, it is set to the same time, it is set to the same time. crafted a plan that is both technology neutral and cost-effective. At the same time, it sets too clear path to ensure that every resident of [State] can access high-speed internet—furtherin

we commend the N LIA and the Department of Commerce for issuing a policy framewo will ensure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and with all deliberate speed. The [Sate] will ensure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and with all deliberate speed. The [State]
Broadband Office has worked hard to meet the tight deadlines set out by the Policy Notice, while Broadband Othice has worked hard to meet the tight deadlines set out by the Policy Notice, while also

We respectfully urge the Department to approve [State]'s Final Proposal in a timely manner so We respectfully urge the Department to approve [State] a rinal proposal in a unity manner that implementation can proceed without delay. In addition, we look forward to guidance that implementation can proceed without delay. It addition, we look forward to guidance regarding allowable uses of non-deployment funds.] We stand ready to support this effort and Thank you for your continued leadership in expanding broadband access and opportunity

Congressional Delegation Ariel Roth

# **State Updates**

What Can State Connections Do For You?

### **Letter Templates**

- National & State
- Policy
- Support

**Informational Speakers on Calls** 

**Individual Meetings** 

**Legislative Bills – Monitoring and Sharing** 

## **State Updates**

State Legislation Updates

### Affordability/Adoption

- New York: Affordable Broadband Act requires ISPs to offer low income plan at \$15 for 25 Mbps or \$20 for 200 Mbps
- Connecticut: Net Equality Program requires ISPs to offer low income plan at \$40 for 100 /5 Mbps increasing to 100/20 Mbps after 1 year
- More states with bills in committee (Vermont, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Maryland)

### **Permitting and Poles**

- Idaho: (H 180) addresses delays in the permitting process setting timeframes for cities or counties to approve, modify or deny applications. Also establishes that when public utilities and service providers cannot agree on terms for pole attachments, the commission will regulate the terms to ensure fair cost recovery for utilities.
- North Carolina: (H-125) updates Broadband Pole Replacement Program to streamline access, cost transparency, and reimbursement reporting.

# **State Updates**

State Legislation Updates

### **Digital Equity Grant Program**

 Kansas Governor announced \$10.4 in Advancing Digital Opportunities to Connect Kansas (ADOPT) program to make public Wi-Fi accessible and distributing devices in underserved areas.

### **Broadband as Utility**

 Arkansas: (HB 1737) amends the Transmitting Utility Act to include fiber optic and broadband services in the definition of "transmitting utility" to encompass contemporary communication technologies.

## **Contact Information**

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