

San Antonio and Greater Bexar County Community Digital Equity Plan and Roadmap

Funding Overview

August 2021

Disclaimer:

The information found in this portal is intended for public use. It reflects work produced and provided by the SA Digital Connects team and community members starting in January 2021 to the present.

Some information will reflect the moment in time when the work was done. Data, funding, maps and assumptions may fluctuate in the everchanging digital ecosystem.

Funding Overview

COSA / Bexar can make use of available funding at federal, state & local levels



Federal



State



Local

	Federal	State	Local
Overview	The federal government unlocked recovery funds to connect households in COVID and continued existing programs to expand broadband access	Various statewide initiatives have been launched in Texas to increase digital equity	Local city, county, and philanthropic funds support community-based initiatives and municipal projects
Funds Available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recovery funds (e.g., CARES, CRRSA including EBB, ARPA) • Existing programs (E-Rate, Lifeline) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation Connectivity (education-focused) • State budgets (e.g., new broadband legislation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City / County budgets • Municipal broadband bonds
COSA / Bexar Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capture available recovery dollars where applicable • Help orgs and households apply for ongoing programs while advocating for increased funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage the funds and negotiated pricing unlocked by Operation Connectivity • Ensure adequate funding is passed in new state legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the best strategies (e.g., municipal bonds, emerging tech) to connect communities • Fund community / city projects where support is needed most

For each relevant major funding source, several key questions to consider

- Which specific **funding streams** intersect can be applied to broadband?
- Who is **responsible** for the funds and how are they allocated?
- How much **funding** is available to our focus geographies (e.g., state, county, city)?
- What are the **allowable uses** of funds?
- What **plans** are already in place for use of the funds? Where is there an **opportunity to influence** future plans?

Federal | Several buckets of recovery funds can be used for broadband access

Non-exhaustive

Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act

- COVID Relief Funding allocations to states for flexible use, including broadband
- Education Stabilization Fund allocations for distance learning
- USDA and FCC broadband programs to expand access

Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA)

- Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) Fund to connect low-income households to internet
- Assistance for new or existing USDA, NTIA and FCC broadband programs
- Rental Assistance administered by state agencies (including broadband services)

The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

- Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds for flexible use, including broadband
- Coronavirus Capital Project Fund for infrastructure projects, with emphasis on connectivity
- Others including school/library connectivity funding through E-Rate, inclusion of broadband as an eligible use of the Homeowner Assistance fund, expansion of the Rental Assistance fund


American Jobs Plan (not yet enacted)¹

- Infrastructure transformation creating jobs and raising wages, with significant funds for Broadband
- Infrastructure investments across transportation, water, electricity, and broadband services
- Goal of 100 percent high-speed broadband infrastructure coverage to un/underserved areas

Strategies must be developed to isolate Federal funds and maximize capture of the Bexar County broadband share

1. American Jobs Plan conference bill estimated for August at earliest

Federal | Potentially \$500M of recovery funding available for Greater Bexar County broadband



Broadband

\$50-100M

For COSA/Bexar broadband

	Bexar Broadband (\$M)
• Emergency Broadband Benefit	25-50
• E-rate funding	25-50

Partner with CBOs to drive EBB program awareness and adoption and support ISDs to implement E-rate



Other use cases

100-250M

For COSA/Bexar broadband

	Bexar (\$M)	Est. Broadband Allocation (\$M)
• Education (e.g., ESSER, GEER)	1,300	75-200
• Health (e.g., FCC telehealth)	250	25-50
• Housing (e.g., Rental Assistance)	220	<5

Engage relevant stakeholders (e.g., LEAs, CBOS) to prioritize digital use cases, raise awareness for programs



State and Local Gov't Fiscal Recovery

\$100-200M

For COSA/Bexar broadband

	Bexar (\$M)	Est. Broadband Allocation (\$M)
• State fiscal recovery fund	1,200	50-150
• County fiscal recovery fund	400	25-50
• City fiscal recovery fund	330	25-50
• State capital projects fund	30	<10

Advocate for State funding to be allocated to digital divide needs; partner with County and City officials on local processes secure funding for broadband

The funding for broadband is not guaranteed; the amount funding captured by Bexar County **will vary** depending on the initiative taken and priorities of those in charge

Federal | Existing federal funding can support broadband on an ongoing basis

Illustrative

Federal funding database ...

Details the owning agency, eligible expenses/recipients, and FY20 funding across programs

... can be used to match COSA/Greater Bexar County initiatives to available grants

The image shows three overlapping screenshots of a federal funding database. The top screenshot is titled "Emergency federal funding that can support broadband efforts (I/III)". The middle screenshot is titled "Emergency federal funding that can support broadband efforts (II/III)". The bottom screenshot is titled "Emergency federal funding that can support broadband efforts (III/III)" and contains a table with the following data:

Source	Total size	SA broadband share	Description	Distribution channel	SA Action Steps
Tribal Broadband Connectivity Grant	175	100%	Supports infrastructure deployment and/or broadband service in tribal lands	Tribal governments and organizations apply to receive grants	Apply through NTIA to access grant
Broadband Infrastructure Deployment Grant	100M	100%	Advance deployment of fixed broadband service in qualifying areas	Projects under partnership between state governments and other local governments for which the state are eligible to apply	Apply through NTIA to access grant
Community Health Initiatives	122M	100%	Provide grants to promote health care provider recruitment, retention, and other public health investments	Disbursements to health care providers based on formulas tracking patient visits	Work with providers to support telehealth initiatives
VA Funding (Department of Veterans Affairs)	514.75	100%	Supports COVID-19 related health care, information technology, facility requirements, and telehealth	Funds spent within the VA supporting internal initiatives	Contact local VA to coordinate digital inclusion efforts
NTIA Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund	113M	100%	Increase funds to direct to eligible services and capacity for rural hospitals, including telehealth	Disbursements to health care providers calculated as a percentage of previous Medicare payments	Coordinate with providers to identify any current need and gaps in access
Emergency Fund	112M	100%	Health care providers that unable to pay mortgage due to COVID-19	State housing agencies review funds to be disbursed to residents	Work with community orgs to spread awareness
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Full database included in appendix



NTIA Broadband Infrastructure Deployment Grant to build fiber and expand access



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to fund employment programs, including digital literacy trainings



Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to support digital programs in affordable housing



Student Support and Academic Enrichment Program to improve use of technology/digital literacy programming for students

Assess full list of COSA/Bexar broadband initiatives And available grants to determine which to act on

State | Texas to potentially unlock additional broadband funding through federal sources and the state budget via House Bill 5

Preliminary

Proposed elements of the House's Bill 5 Budget for 2022-2023



~\$3-4M of the state budget to go towards **administrative broadband funding** (e.g., creation of a Statewide Broadband Development Office)



Allocation of **\$100M of federal funding** towards broadband development programs



Expansion of digital programming in colleges (e.g., ~\$1M for UT Austin College of Fine Arts, ~\$1.8M for UT Permain Basin) and digital inclusion for libraries (e.g., ~\$3.75M in funding)



Provision of funding for **additional broadband projects** (e.g., ~\$550K for Monahans Broadband Project, ~\$250K for Cameron County broadband expansion)

*Advocate for state funds to be allocated to COSA / Bexar priority areas;
Identify areas where the state can play a state-wide role (vs. rural focus)*

State | TEA is coordinating state funding for student access

Since March 2020, Operation Connectivity, directed by Governor Greg Abbott, TEA, and Dallas ISD, has worked to close the K-12 digital divide



Phase 1: Historical triage using CARES funding

- Identified **\$600M+** in funding across Tech & Instructional Materials Allotment, and COVID relief funds (CARES Act)
- Developed a procurement strategy and negotiated with ISPs to secure a **20-40% discount**, closing the full device gap and ~35% of the internet gap



Phase II: Expansion of affordable access through contracting

- **Negotiating with ISPs** to get uniform low pricing on broadband service for students and families
- **Partnering with districts** to deliver hotspots to disconnected students to provide at-home broadband



Phase III: Piloting and funding of emerging tech

- Launched RFO for traditional and **innovative technologies**, including radio wave and private LTE networks, to expand infrastructure for the 350K students without a broadband hook-up
- Considering allocating a portion of **\$12B of March 2021 ARP funding** to cover connectivity efforts

Stay up to date on program developments; use the affordable rates that are negotiated, and advocate for the education needs of COSA/Bexar ISDs

Local | Municipal bonds can be a mechanism to expand broadband access



Call to action for bond usage

Municipal bonds have historically been used to finance public projects (e.g., roads, schools)

Advocacy has grown around bond usage for digital inclusion:



TechBloc CEO, David Heard, pushed for inclusion of digital infrastructure in San Antonio's 2022 bond program



Forbes and Pew Trusts have advocated for the potential of municipal fiber bonds



Benefit of muni broadband bonds

- ✓ Enables city-sponsored digital infrastructure buildout, akin to roadways, power, water projects
- ✓ Creates public-private partnership between the city and ISP where residents are able to affordably repay the investment over time
- ✓ Lowers prices and improves services through ISP competition, incentivizing strong performance for contracts renewals



Examples of municipal bonds



Salt Lake City communities combined to finance a fiber network to homes, allowing all service providers to operate to lower service costs



New Hampshire towns have issued bonds to construct fiber networks, funding the bond payments through ~\$10 monthly subscriber fees

Consider municipal bond model and take necessary local steps to include proposal for City council

COSA / Bexar should focus on capturing available funding in the near-term and then advocate and unlock sustainable funding sources



Near-Term

Capture available funding, engaging schools, libraries, and community organizations to maximize spending and adoption of emergency federal / state funds

Key Actions

- Advocate at state level and partner on processes at the county and city levels for **federal recovery funds allocation to broadband uses**
- **Partner with community orgs to drive adoption of broadband affordability programs** (e.g., EBB, Lifeline, Rental Assistance)
- **Attract catalytic philanthropic donors** to fill gaps



Longer-Term

Advocate and unlock sustainable funding sources (e.g., government, private) to maintain and expand upon existing digital inclusion programming and infrastructure










Key Actions

- Advocate for **expanded sustainable federal funding** (e.g., E-Rate, digital literacy, improved Lifeline) and continue to apply for existing federal grants
- Partner with the state to allocate **sufficient funding and resources** in Texas' broadband plan
- Consider **new local strategies** (e.g., municipal bonds, public rebate) to connect communities

It is critical to identify who will drive these actions forward and how it will be coordinated

Appendix

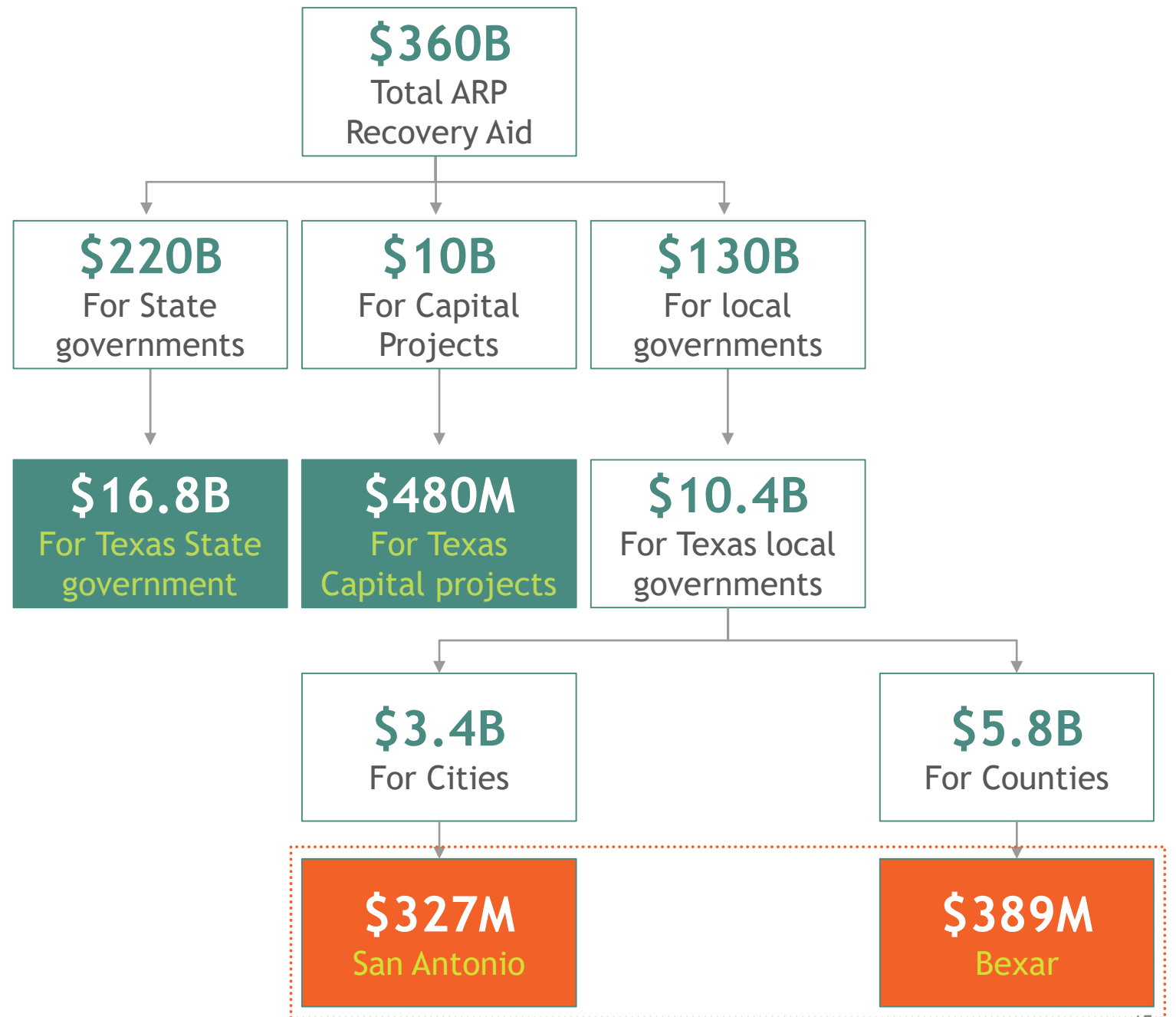
Emergency federal funding that can support broadband efforts (I/III)

Source	Size (\$)	Description	Distribution channel	SA Action Steps	Relevance for SA	
Health	Community health initiatives	22B	Covers community health centers, public health workers, and other public health investments	Disbursements to health care providers based on formulas tracking patient intake, operating expenses, and other criteria	Work with providers to support telehealth initiatives	
	VA funding expansion ¹	16.7B	Supports COVID-19 related health care, information technology, facility requirements, and telehealth	Funds spent within the VA supporting internal initiatives	Work with VA to support digital initiatives; raise awareness with vets	
	FCC telehealth initiatives	200M	Supports health care professionals in providing information services and devices for telehealth services	Health care providers receive reimbursements for related expenses	Work with providers to support telehealth initiatives	
	HHS Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund	180M	Increase funds to DHHS to expand services and capacity for rural hospitals, including telehealth	Disbursements to health care providers calculated as a proportion of previous Medicare payments	Work with providers to support telehealth; but limited Bexar eligibility	
Housing	Emergency Rental Assistance	22B	Assists households that unable to pay rent/utilities due to COVID-19	State housing agencies receive funds to be disbursed to residents	Raise resident awareness and help them apply	
	Homeowner Assistance	10B	Assists households that unable to pay mortgage/utilities due to COVID-19	State housing agencies receive funds to be disbursed to residents	Raise resident awareness and help them apply	
Recovery Aid	Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund	220B	Provides broadband funds for underserved/underserved areas (i.e., without wireline access at 25/3 Mbps)	Funds directly sent to state government	Advocate for state government to prioritize digital divide efforts	
	Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund	130B	Provides broadband funds for underserved/underserved areas (i.e., without wireline access at 25/3 Mbps)	Funds directly sent to local governments	Advocate for state government to prioritize digital divide efforts	
	Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund	10B	Provides funds for high-quality broadband, connectivity infrastructure, devices, and equipment	State governments may apply for grants from the Treasury Department	Advocate for state government to prioritize digital divide efforts	

 See next page for TX details

1. Combined total of VA telecommunications funding (2.2B, CARES Act) and overall VA funding expansion (\$14.5B, ARP)
 Source: American Rescue Plan (2021); National Law Review; National Association of Counties

SA/Greater Bexar County to receive **\$700M+** in Recovery Aid, Texas another \$17B that can be used for broadband efforts



Emergency federal funding that can support broadband efforts (II/III)

	Source	Total size	SA broadband share	Description	Distribution channel	SA Action Steps
Recovery Aid	Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund	\$220B	\$100M+	Provides flexible funds to be used for a variety of purposes relating to COVID-19 fiscal recovery	Funds directly sent to state government	Partner with governor's office and state legislature to allocate additional funding for digital agenda
	Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund	\$130B	\$50-100M	Provides flexible funds to be used for a variety of purposes relating to COVID-19 fiscal recovery	Funds directly sent to local governments	Work with local stakeholders to identify unmet needs determine most effective fund allocation
	Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund	\$10B	<\$5M	Provides flexible funds to be used in the areas of work, education, and health monitoring	State governments may apply for grants from the Treasury Department	Partner with governor's office and state legislature to allocate additional funding for digital agenda
Education	ESSER ¹	\$190B	\$100M+	Provides flexible relief funds for K-12 students impacted by the pandemic	LEAs must apply to SEAs in order to access subgrants. Allocation based on Title I formula	Apply through TEA to access grants for ISDs
	GEER ²	\$4.3B	<\$5M	Provides flexible relief funds for K-12 students impacted by the pandemic	Governors may provide subgrants LEAs after submitting grant request to Department of Education	Partner with governor's office to provide subgrants to ISDs
Broadband	Emergency (E-rate) Connectivity Fund	\$7.1B	\$25-50M	Funds connectivity and devices for in-home use	Eligible schools and libraries can solicit competitive bids and select providers	Negotiate with ISPs on behalf of ISDs to reach most favorable terms for service
	Emergency Broadband Benefit (FCC)	\$3.2B	\$25-50M	Provides subsidy to low-income households for broadband in form of monthly discount	Households apply through providers; providers will submit for reimbursement	Work with community groups to spread awareness and encourage mass program participation
	Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) Program	\$3B	<\$5M	Subsidizes broadband projects in economically distressed communities	Municipal and local governments are eligible to apply for grants	Contact regional office for Economic Development Administration (EDA) to submit grant application

1. Combined total of ESSER I (\$13.2B, CARES Act), ESSER II (\$54.3B, CRRSA), and ARP ESSER 2. Combined total of GEER I (\$1B, CARES Act) and GEER II (CRRSA)
 Source: American Rescue Plan (2021); National Law Review; National Association of Counties

Emergency federal funding that can support broadband efforts (III/III)

	Source	Total size	SA broadband share	Description	Distribution channel	SA Action Steps
Broadband	Tribal Broadband Connectivity Grant	\$1B	<\$5M	Supports infrastructure deployment /adoption/affordability on tribal lands	Tribal governments and organizations apply to receive grants	Apply through NTIA to access grant
	Broadband Infrastructure Deployment Grant	\$288M	<\$5M	Advances deployment of fixed broadband service in qualifying areas	Projects under partnerships between state governments and either a local government or ISP within the state are eligible to apply	Apply through NTIA to access grant
	Connecting Minority Communities Pilot Program	\$285M	<\$5M	Provides grants to minority institutions to support broadband development/adoption	HBCUs, Tribal colleges/ universities, or other minority institutions are eligible	Apply through NTIA to access grant
Health	Community health initiatives	\$22B	\$5-25M	Covers community health centers, public health workers, and other public health investments	Disbursements to providers based on formulas tracking patient intake, operating expenses, and other criteria	Coordinate with providers to identify any unmet need and gaps in access
	VA funding expansion ¹	\$16.7B	\$5-25M	Supports COVID-19 related health care, information technology, facility requirements, and telehealth	Funds spent within the VA supporting internal initiatives	Contact local VA to coordinate digital inclusion efforts
	FCC telehealth initiatives	\$200M	<\$5M	Supports health care professionals in providing information services and devices for telehealth services	Health care providers receive reimbursements for related expenses	Coordinate with providers to identify any unmet need and gaps in access
	HHS Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund	\$180M	<\$5M	Increase funds to DHHS to expand services and capacity for rural hospitals, including telehealth	Disbursements to health care providers calculated as a proportion of previous Medicare payments	Coordinate with providers to identify any unmet need and gaps in access
Housing	Emergency Rental Assistance	\$22B	<\$5M	Assists households that unable to pay rent/utilities due to COVID-19	State housing agencies receive funds to be disbursed to residents	Work with community orgs to spread awareness
	Homeowner Assistance	\$10B	<\$5M	Assists households that unable to pay mortgage/utilities due to COVID-19	State housing agencies receive funds to be disbursed to residents	Work with community orgs to spread awareness

1. Combined total of VA telecommunications funding (2.2B, CARES Act) and overall VA funding expansion (\$14.5B, ARP)
 Source: American Rescue Plan (2021); National Law Review; National Association of Counties

Ongoing Federal Funding (I/III)

Agency	Program	Description	Eligible Recipient	FY'20 Funding
FCC	High-cost Program (incl. Connect America, Rural Digital Opp., 5G Funds)	Broadband infra. for rural, high-cost areas at rates comparable to urban	Eligible telco carriers	\$4.5B
National Science Foundation	Platforms for Advanced Wireless Research	Experimental research and evaluation on next-gen wireless tech	Libraries, schools, ISPs, SMBs, hospitals, utilities	\$9M
National Science Foundation	Smart and Connected Communities	Research pairs tech/social advances with comm. engagement/econ. dev.	Same as above + state/local govt.	\$43M
National Science Foundation	Spectrum/Wireless Innovation enabled by Future Technologies	Research on effective wireless spectrum utilization	Higher education institutions	\$12M
U.S. Department of Transportation	BUILD (F/k/a TIGER)	Supports capital infrastructure projects incl. connecting communities/people to jobs, services, and education etc.	State/local govts., tribal entities	\$1B
Federal Highway Administration	Realty Program (Utility Right-of-way) and Utilities Program	Funding for construction/maintenance of highways/public services	State / local govts., tribal entities	TBD
FEMA / DHS	State Homeland Security Program and Urban Areas Security Initiative	Cybersecurity, enhancing infrastructure resiliency incl. broadband deployment	State Administrative Agency deploys fund within the state/ UASIs	FY'21: \$505M to SHSP; \$705M to UASI.
FEMA / DHS	Emergency Management Performance Grants	Purchase of comms. tech/devices for wireless broadband network buildout	FEMA awards funds directly to all states/territories	FY'21: \$355M
U.S. Department of Transportation	INFRA Grants	Funding highway/freight projects, incl. broadband deployment	TBD	\$906M
National Science Foundation	Campus Cyberinfrastructure (CC*)	Invests in cyberinfrastructure, innovation for science applications	Higher education institutions, non-profits	\$17M

Availability

Ongoing Federal Funding (II/III)

	Agency	Program	Description	Eligible Recipient	FY'20 Funding
● Afford.	FCC	Lifeline	Discount on phone/broadband service for low-income HHDs	Eligible telco carriers	FY'19: \$982M
	Employment and Training Admin.	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)	Workforce dev/employment programs, incl. digital literacy training	Higher education institution , state/ local govts.	\$5.5B
● Adoption	Employment and Training Admin.	Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College/ Career Training Program	Worker trainings/programs in manufacturing, health care, IT, etc.	Community colleges	\$1.9B
	Employment and Training Admin.	Workforce Development in Telco. Sector	Apprenticeship programs for telco. careers to meet network infra. needs	Employers	\$6M
	Institute of Museum and Library Services	Grants to States Program	Support America's museums, libraries, and related organizations	Libraries, state/ local govts.	\$166M
● Econ. Dev.	Economic Development Administration	Disaster Supplemental Notice of Funding Opportunity	Develop/improve assets so that businesses can form, grow, innovate	Libraries, non-profit orgs, higher education, state/ local govt., tribal entities	FY'19: \$587 Million
	Economic Development Administration	Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs	Supports economic development e.g., job creation, investment, innovation	Libraries, non-profit orgs, higher education, state/ local govt., tribal entities	FY'20: \$200M
	HUD Community Planning and Development Office	Section 108 Loan Guarantee	Federally guaranteed loans for physical and economic revitalization projects.	State/local govts., non-profit, rural recipients	\$300M

Ongoing Federal Funding (III/III)

	Agency	Program	Description	Eligible Recipient	FY'20 Funding
● Econ. Dev.	Community Development Financial Institutions Fund	New Markets Tax Credit Program	Business investment in underserved low-income communities	Community Development Entities (CDEs)	\$5B
	Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC)	Community Reinvestment Act (CRA)	Encourages financial institutions to help meet the credit needs of low-income comm.	TBD	TBD
● Public housing	HUD Community Planning and Development Office	Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	Support for affordable housing and economic revitalization	State/local govts., non-profit, rural recipients	\$3.4B
	HUD Office of Multifamily Housing	Neighborhood Networks (multifamily housing)	Community tech. centers for digital opportunity to low-income residents of HUD	HUD Property Owners	\$4.5B
● Education	Department of Education	Improving Basic Programs Operated by LEAs	Investment in academic achievement of low-income students	State/local govts., rural recipients	\$16B
	Department of Education	Student Support/Academic Enrichment Program	Improving the conditions for learning/digital literacy for all students.	K-12 schools, state/local govt.	\$1.2B
	Department of Education	Strengthening Institutions	Strengthen academic quality of higher ed. that supports low-income students	Higher education institutions	\$107M
	FCC	E-Rate Program	Schools/libraries receive discounts on costs of in-school internet	Libraries, K-12 schools	FY'19: \$4B
● Health	Universal Service Administrative Company	Connected Care Pilot Program (and Emergency COVID-19 Telehealth Program)	A three-year pilots for support connected care and telehealth over the long term	Non-profits, health care provider	FY'21: \$250M



Thank You