

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3994

To establish the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 6, 2017

Mr. TONKO (for himself and Mr. LANCE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To establish the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Advancing Critical
5 Connectivity Expands Service, Small Business Resources,
6 Opportunities, Access, and Data Based on Assessed Need
7 and Demand Act” or the “ACCESS BROADBAND Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OFFICE OF INTERNET**
2 **CONNECTIVITY AND GROWTH.**

3 Not later than 180 days after the date of the enact-
4 ment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary shall establish
5 the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth within the
6 National Telecommunications and Information Adminis-
7 tration.

8 **SEC. 3. DUTIES.**

9 (a) **OUTREACH.**—The Office shall—

10 (1) connect with communities that need access
11 to high-speed internet and improved digital inclusion
12 efforts through various forms of outreach and com-
13 munication techniques;

14 (2) hold regional workshops across the country
15 to share best practices and effective strategies for
16 promoting broadband access and adoption;

17 (3) develop targeted broadband training and
18 presentations for various demographic communities
19 through various media; and

20 (4) develop and distribute publications (includ-
21 ing toolkits, primers, manuals, and white papers)
22 providing guidance, strategies, and insights to com-
23 munities as the communities develop strategies to
24 expand broadband access and adoption.

25 (b) **TRACKING OF FEDERAL DOLLARS.**—

1 (1) BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE.—The Of-
2 fice shall track the construction and use of any
3 broadband infrastructure built using any Federal
4 support in a central database.

5 (2) ACCOUNTING MECHANISM.—The Office
6 shall develop a streamlined accounting mechanism
7 by which any agency offering a Federal broadband
8 support program and the Commission through the
9 Universal Service Fund shall provide the information
10 described in paragraph (1) in a standardized and ef-
11 ficient fashion.

12 (3) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the
13 date of the enactment of this Act, and every year
14 thereafter, the Office shall make public on the
15 website of the Office and submit to the Committee
16 on Energy and Commerce of the House of Rep-
17 resentatives and the Committee on Commerce,
18 Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report
19 on the following:

20 (A) A description of the work of the Office
21 for the previous year and the number of resi-
22 dents of the United States that received
23 broadband as result of Federal broadband sup-
24 port programs and the Universal Service Fund
25 program.

1 (B) A description of how many residents of
2 the United States were provided broadband by
3 which universal service mechanism or which
4 Federal broadband support program.

5 (C) An estimate of the economic impact of
6 such broadband deployment efforts on the local
7 economy, including any effect on small busi-
8 nesses or jobs.

9 **SEC. 4. STREAMLINED APPLICATIONS FOR SUPPORT.**

10 (a) AGENCY CONSULTATION.—The Office shall con-
11 sult with any agency offering a Federal broadband support
12 program to streamline and standardize the applications
13 process for such program.

14 (b) AGENCY STREAMLINING.—Any agency offering a
15 Federal broadband support program shall amend their ap-
16 plications for broadband support, to the extent practicable
17 and as necessary, to streamline and standardize applica-
18 tions for Federal broadband support programs across the
19 Government.

20 (c) SINGLE APPLICATION.—To the greatest extent
21 practicable, the Office shall seek to create one application
22 that may be submitted to apply for all, or substantially
23 all, Federal broadband support programs.

24 (d) WEBSITE REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days
25 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Office shall

1 create a central website through which potential applicants
2 can learn about and apply for support through any Fed-
3 eral broadband support program.

4 **SEC. 5. COORDINATION OF SUPPORT.**

5 The Office, any agency that offers a Federal
6 broadband support program, and the Commission through
7 the Universal Service Fund shall coordinate with the Of-
8 fice to ensure that support is being distributed in an effi-
9 cient manner, in a financial sustainable manner, with the
10 goal of serving the largest number of persons in the
11 United States while promoting the most job and economic
12 growth for all residents of the United States.

13 **SEC. 6. DEFINITIONS.**

14 In this Act:

15 (1) AGENCY.—The term “agency” has the
16 meaning given that term in section 551 of title 5,
17 United States Code.

18 (2) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The term “Assist-
19 ant Secretary” means the Assistant Secretary of
20 Commerce for Communications and Information.

21 (3) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission”
22 means the Federal Communications Commission.

23 (4) FEDERAL BROADBAND SUPPORT PRO-
24 GRAM.—The term “Federal broadband support pro-
25 gram” does not include any Universal Service Fund

1 program and means any of the following programs
2 (or any other similar Federal program) to the extent
3 the program offers broadband internet service for
4 residential, commercial, or academic establishments:

5 (A) The Telecommunications and Tech-
6 nology Program of the Appalachian Regional
7 Commission.

8 (B) The Telecommunications Infrastruc-
9 ture Loans and Loan Guarantees, the Rural
10 Broadband Access Loans and Loan Guarantees,
11 the Substantially Underserved Trust Areas Pro-
12 visions, the Community Connect Grant Pro-
13 gram, and the Distance Learning and Tele-
14 medicine Grant Program of the Rural Utilities
15 Service of the Department of Agriculture.

16 (C) The Public Works and Economic Ad-
17 justment Assistance Programs and the Plan-
18 ning and Local Technical Assistance Programs
19 of the Economic Development Administration of
20 the Department of Commerce.

21 (D) The Community Development Block
22 Grants and Section 108 Loan Guarantees, the
23 Funds for Public Housing Authorities: Capital
24 Fund and Operating Fund, the Multifamily
25 Housing, the Indian Community Development

1 Block Grant Program, the Indian Housing
2 Block Grant Program, the Title VI Loan Guar-
3 antee Program, Choice Neighborhoods, the
4 HOME Investment Partnerships Program, the
5 Housing Trust Fund, and the Housing Oppor-
6 tunities for Persons with AIDS of the Depart-
7 ment of Housing and Urban Development.

8 (E) The American Job Centers of the Em-
9 ployment and Training Administration of the
10 Department of Labor.

11 (F) The Native American Library Services
12 Basic Grants, the Native American Library
13 Services Enhancement Grants, the Native Ha-
14 waiian Library Services Grants, the Laura
15 Bush 21st Century Librarian Program, the Na-
16 tional Leadership Grants for Libraries, and the
17 Sparks! Ignition Grants for Libraries of the Of-
18 fice of Library Services of the Institute of Mu-
19 seum and Library Services.

20 (5) OFFICE.—The term “Office” means the Of-
21 fice of Internet Connectivity and Growth established
22 pursuant to section 2.

23 (6) UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND PROGRAM.—The
24 term “Universal Service Fund program” means any
25 program authorized under section 254 of the Com-

1 munications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 254) to help de-
2 ploy broadband.

3 (7) UNIVERSAL SERVICE MECHANISM.—The
4 term “universal service mechanism” means any
5 funding stream provided by a Universal Service
6 Fund program to support broadband access.

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