Minority Broadband Initiative

National League of Cities Congressional City Conference
Information and Technology Communications Federal Advocacy Committee
Meeting
Sunday, March 8, 2020
Washington, D.C.
Minority Broadband Initiative (MBI)

• MBI launched November 2019 to leverage the networks and location of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to expand broadband coverage to underserved communities, particularly in the rural South. NTIA will use its convening authority to better ensure that HBCUs are included in broadband planning nationwide.

• The MBI will work with connected HBCUs, or “Smart HBCUs,” to promote them as hubs of digital applications and innovation and force multipliers to achieve the following broad strategic policy objectives:
  – Convening forums where stakeholders can explore options for leveraging HBCU broadband infrastructure to connect neighboring communities in the rural South; and
  – Using broadband infrastructure investment as a catalyst for adoption that will result in job growth and economic development and deployment of advanced mobile technologies primarily in the economically distressed communities of the rural South.
Smart HBCUs

Modeled on the Smart Cities Program of a “connected infrastructure” vision, the MBI is promoting Smart HBCUs to enable expanding broadband connectivity for communities in the Rural South.

Smart HBCUs:

– Support economic growth and competitiveness in anchor communities through high capacity broadband networks and connectivity.
– Produce a new generation of world-class faculty and students of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and provide the Nation with a well-educated and talented workforce via essential Cyberinfrastructure.
– Provide jumping-off-points to serve surrounding school districts, residences and business consumers.
– Serve as force multipliers for Smart HBCU Anchor Communities.
MBI and HBCUs

- HBCUs are almost evenly split between public and private nonprofit institutions.
- 83 HBCUs are located in the rural South Black Belt in the 11 states stretching from southern Virginia to east Texas, covering over 600 counties that represent the nation’s largest contiguous pocket of poverty where there is high unemployment, poor education, health disparities and lack of broadband access.
- Black Belt HBCUs are potential force multipliers for expanding broadband in the rural South.
# Black Belt HBCUs

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<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th># of Schools</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
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</table>
Collective Impact Investing for Digital Development

Areas of Impact Investing Opportunities Zone
- Public-Private Partnerships

State 1890e School
- Areas of Collaboration
  - Shared Courses
  - Dual Enrollment
  - Research
  - Articulation Agreements
  - Apprenticeships/Credentials
  - Digital Literacy

Anchor Communities

Public & Private HBCUs

Collective Impact Investing Outcome
- Smart HBCU Broadband Deployment
- Smart Communities
- Smart Agriculture
- Digital Inclusion
- Economic Development
- Sustainability

Broadband Infrastructure—State Networks, RENs, Electric Co-ops
Contact Information

Francine E. Alkisswani, Ph.D.
Lead, Minority Broadband Initiative
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

Email: falkisswani@ntia.gov
Phone: 202-482-5560