

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1328

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

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 25, 2019

Mr. TONKO (for himself and Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana) 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 and ac-
3 cess to any broadband infrastructure built using any
4 Federal 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 financial assistance or grants for such pro-
14 gram.

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

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

1 (d) WEBSITE REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days
2 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Office shall
3 create a central website through which potential applicants
4 can learn about and apply for support through any Fed-
5 eral broadband support program.

6 **SEC. 5. COORDINATION OF SUPPORT.**

7 The Office, any agency that offers a Federal broad-
8 band support program, and the Commission through the
9 Universal Service Fund shall coordinate with the Office
10 to ensure that support is being distributed in an efficient,
11 technology-neutral, and financially sustainable manner,
12 with the goal of serving the largest number of persons in
13 the United States while avoiding overbuilding and pro-
14 moting the most job and economic growth for all residents
15 of the United States.

16 **SEC. 6. DEFINITIONS.**

17 In this Act:

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

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

24 (3) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission”
25 means the Federal Communications Commission.

1 (4) FEDERAL BROADBAND SUPPORT PRO-
2 GRAM.—The term “Federal broadband support pro-
3 gram” does not include any Universal Service Fund
4 program and means any of the following programs
5 (or any other similar Federal program) to the extent
6 the program offers broadband internet service or
7 programs for promoting broadband access and adop-
8 tion for various demographic communities through
9 various media for residential, commercial, commu-
10 nity providers, or academic establishments:

11 (A) The Telecommunications and Tech-
12 nology Program of the Appalachian Regional
13 Commission.

14 (B) The Telecommunications Infrastruc-
15 ture Loans and Loan Guarantees, the Rural
16 Broadband Access Loans and Loan Guarantees,
17 the Substantially Underserved Trust Areas Pro-
18 visions, the Community Connect Grant Pro-
19 gram, and the Distance Learning and Tele-
20 medicine Grant Program of the Rural Utilities
21 Service of the Department of Agriculture.

22 (C) The Public Works and Economic Ad-
23 justment Assistance Programs and the Plan-
24 ning and Local Technical Assistance Programs

1 of the Economic Development Administration of
2 the Department of Commerce.

3 (D) The Community Development Block
4 Grants and Section 108 Loan Guarantees, the
5 Funds for Public Housing Authorities: Capital
6 Fund and Operating Fund, the Multifamily
7 Housing, the Indian Community Development
8 Block Grant Program, the Indian Housing
9 Block Grant Program, the Title VI Loan Guar-
10 antee Program, Choice Neighborhoods, the
11 HOME Investment Partnerships Program, the
12 Housing Trust Fund, and the Housing Oppor-
13 tunities for Persons with AIDS of the Depart-
14 ment of Housing and Urban Development.

15 (E) The American Job Centers of the Em-
16 ployment and Training Administration of the
17 Department of Labor.

18 (F) The Library Services and Technology
19 Grant Programs of the Institute of Museum
20 and Library Services.

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

24 (6) UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND PROGRAM.—The
25 term “Universal Service Fund program” means any

1 program authorized under section 254 of the Com-
2 munications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 254) to help de-
3 ploy broadband.

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

8 **SEC. 7. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

9 Nothing in this Act is intended to alter or amend any
10 provision of section 254 of the Communications Act of
11 1934 (47 U.S.C. 254).

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