AGENDA

Broadband Advisory Council Virtual Meeting
August 14, 2020
3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
To access the meeting using video
meet.google.com/pkg-uphr-eqr
To access the meeting using audio
(US) (413) 889-2315 PIN: 790 041 839#

I.   Opening
    a. Call to Order   Chair, Senator Boysko
    b. Roll Call   Tamarah Holmes, Ph.D

II. Consent Agenda   Chair, Senator Boysko
    a. Approval of Minutes: July 27, 2020

III. Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) budget and other items for special session
    a. VATI Overview-Tamarah Holmes, Ph.D
    b. Discussion-Council Members

IV. CARES Act and locality broadband responses to the pandemic
    a. Mike Culp, Albemarle Broadband Authority
    b. Caroline Luxhoj, DHCD

V.   Presentation by the Department of Education   Dave Myers, Ph.D

VI. Hotspot availability, status of "Keep America Connected" pledge and opportunities for expansion, including affordability/accessibility programs
    a. Ray LaMura-VCTA
    b. Rich Schollmann, VTIA
    c. Gary Wood, Central Virginia Electric Cooperative (CVEC)

VII. New Business   Council Members

VIII. Public Comment   Public

IX. Adjournment   Chair, Senator Boysko

BROADBAND ADVISORY COUNCIL
July 27, 2020
UNAPPROVED Minutes
3:00 PM
Digital Meeting via Google Meets

Members Present   Members Absent

Senator Jennifer Boysko, Chair   Rosemary Wilson
Delegate Roslyn C. Tyler, Vice Chair
James Carr
Michael Culp
Senator Ghazala Hashmi
Kristie Helmick Proctor
Delegate Chris Hurst
Mike Keyser
Delegate Paul E. Krizek
Ray LaMura
Delegate James A. Leftwich, Jr.
Senator Lynwood W. Lewis, Jr.
The Honorable Bettina K. Ring
Evan Feinman representing The Honorable Brian Ball

Call to Order   Dr. Tamarah Holmes, Director of the Office of Broadband at the
                       Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
                       (DHCD), called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

                       Dr. Holmes announced that due to the Governor's Declared State of
                       Emergency due to COVID-19, it is impracticable and unsafe for the
                       Commission on Local Government to assemble in a single location,
                       so the commission meeting will be held electronically, by video
                       conference and telephone options, pursuant to 2020 Amendments
                       to the 2020 Appropriation Act. The purpose of the meeting is to
                       discuss or transact the business statutorily required or necessary to
                       continue operations of the Broadband Advisory Council and the
                       discharge of its lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities. The
                       public is welcome to use the link and phone number options made
                       available by staff to attend the meeting electronically. DHCD will
                       make available a recording or transcript of the meeting on its
                       website in accordance with the timeframes established in Sections
                       2.2-3707 and 2.2-3701.1 of the Code of Virginia.

Roll Call	Dr. Holmes, Director of the Office of Broadband for the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), called the roll and stated that a quorum was present.
Welcome and Introduction	Mr. Erik Johnston, Director of DHCD welcomed the Council and members of the public to the Virginia Broadband Advisory Council meeting, introduced DHCD staff and provided an overview of DHCD's new role in staffing the council in partnership with the Division of Legislative Services.
Election of Chair and Vice Chair	Mr. Johnston opened the floor for nominations for Chair to the Council.

A motion was made by Mr. Lamura to nominate Senator Jennifer Boysko as Chair. Senator Boysko accepted the nomination.

A motion was made by Delegate Krizek to nominate Delegate Roslyn C. Tyler as Chair. Delegate Tyler accepted the nomination.

Hearing no further discussion, Mr. Johnston closed the floor to nominations. Senator Boysko was elected Chair (Votes for Boysko: Boysko, Carr, Culp, Hashmi, LaMura, Lewis; Votes for Tyler: Keyser, Krizek, Leftwich, Helmick Proctor, Tyler; Abstained: Feinman, Ring; No-Vote: Hurst).

Chair Boysko opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair to the Council.

A motion was made by Chair Boysko and properly seconded by Mr. LaMura to nominate Delegate Tyler as Vice Chair.

Hearing no further discussion, Chair Boysko closed the floor to nominations. Delegate Tyler was elected Vice Chair (Votes for Tyler: Boysko, Carr, Culp, Feinman, Hashmi, Helmick Proctor, Hurst, Keyser, Krizek, LaMura, Leftwich, Lewis, Ring, Tyler; Abstained: None; No-Vote: None). |
| Adoption of Robert's Rules | On recommendation by staff, Chair Boysko entertained a motion to adopt Robert's Rules as the primary procedure of the Council. A motion was made and properly seconded to adopt Robert's Rules. The motion passed (Yea: Ball, Boysko, Carr, Culp, Hashmi, Helmick Proctor, Hurst Keyser, Krizek, LaMura, Leftwich, Lewis, Ring, Tyler; Nay: None; No-Vote: None). |

Presentation on the Broadband Advisory Council	Dr. Holmes gave a brief presentation highlighting the powers and duties granted to the Broadband Advisory Council.

Mr. Jeffrey Sharp, Senior Attorney at the Division of Legislative Services, provided the Council with a brief overview of the role of Legislative Services as relates to the Broadband Advisory Council as dictated by the enabling legislation. |
| Commonwealth Connect Plan | Mr. Evan Feinman, Chief Broadband Advisor to the Governor, provided for the Council a brief overview of the Commonwealth Connect branding, which is an interagency umbrella that covers all initiatives undertaken by the State to expand broadband coverage across the Commonwealth. Mr. Feinman gave an overview of the achievements, goals, and challenges facing the Commonwealth's goal of providing universal affordable broadband access statewide. |
| Office of Broadband and VATI | Dr. Holmes provided for the Council an overview of the Office of Broadband at DHCD, including the Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) program, which is the primary grant program utilized to expand broadband access to unserved and underserved communities across the Commonwealth. |
| Schedule of Regular Meetings | Dr. Holmes indicated to the Council that staff recommends scheduling a meeting for the Council in both November and May to review progress of expanding broadband access as relates to the VATI program.

Delegate Krizek suggested that the Council may need to meet prior to the Special Session of the General Assembly in August. After discussion, the Council deferred making a decision on the suggestion until a later date. |
| Public Comment Period | No comments were made by the public; the public comment period was then closed. |
| Adjournment | Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned. |

VIRGINIA
DHCD

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Tamarah Holmes Ph.D, Director, Office of Broadband

Partners for Better Communities

Virginia Telecommunication Initiative Overview

FY 2020	
Appropriation	$19 million
Number of Applications	39 representing 43 localities
Total Funds Requested	$43.7 million
Number of projects funded	12

FY 2021	
Appropriation	$19 million Proposed increased to $49.7 million
Notice of Applications	58 representing 62 localities
Total Funds Requested	TBD-Applications due August 17, 2020

VCTA Response To COVID-19

Keep Americans Connected

VCTA members and the broadband industry acted instantaneously when the COVID-19 pandemic shut down America. On March 13, the FCC initiated it's Keep America Connected Program. This action made the broadband industry one of the fastest acting industry responses in the country

More than 800 providers across the country signed this pledge

Keep Americans Connected

All VCTA members signed onto the pledge. While this program expired June 30th, many providers are continuing portions of this pledge

1. Not terminate service to any residential or small business customers because of their inability to pay their bills due to the disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic
2. Waive any late fees that any residential or small business customers incur because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic
3. Open its Wi-Fi hotspots to any American who needs them

Keeping Virginians Connected

- Over 62,500 WiFi hotspots open throughout Virginia for anyone to access

- Automatically upgraded broadband customers to higher speeds at no additional charge

- Initiatives aimed at helping small businesses as the economy reopens - free month of service to new business customers

- No installation costs

All of this information is maintained on vcta.com

VCTA | Broadband Association of Virginia

Network Capacity Continues To Meet Increased Demand

National Upstream Peak Growth
Observed Increase in Peak Consumer Usage

Overall Change in Pre-COVID Internet Usage Since Early March
Compared to the Weekly Usage Change

■ Growth since 3/1   ■ Weekly Growth

Overall growth since 3/1

40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
-10%

03/01   03/28   04/11   04/25   05/09   05/23   06/06   06/20   07/04   07/18   08/08

Source: Data from NCTA member companies • Data is updated on a bi-weekly basis

- VCTA member systems have been able to handle the surge in internet usage during peak times

- Prior to the pandemic, networks were being constantly upgraded to stay ahead of consumer demand

- Members were prepared to handle the increased teleworking and school from home broadband traffic

VCTA | Broadband Association of Virginia

Preparing For The Virtual School Year
Broadband Affordability Programs

For many years VCTA members have recognized the need to provide affordably broadband access solutions for students. The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically increased the need for these programs. Details of these programs include:

- `Low-cost, home internet for $9.95/mo.`

- Open to eligible low-income families
- No data caps
- Minimum speeds of 25/3 (sufficient for online learning, teleworking, teleconferencing, etc.)

More than 220,000 students are connected to in-home internet through VCTA member broadband affordability programs

Sponsored Service Agreements
Keeping Students Connected

Localities have an opportunity to partner with broadband providers to provide free, high quality internet connectivity to students and families in need

- Localities can talk to service providers about entering into sponsored service agreements

- Sponsored Agreements allow localities to purchase affordability access plans for students

- Localities may use CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act funds to pay for these sponsored programs

- Several VCTA members have entered into these agreements with numerous localities in Virginia (including Arlington, Alexandria, Chesterfield, Culpepper, and more)

VCTA | Broadband Association of Virginia

Additional Help For Students

- Comcast is offering a $150 Visa prepaid card to students who sign up for Xfinity service by September 30

- Comcast made thousands of hours of educational programming and resources available to customers on Demand to help families suddenly homeschooling

- Cox partnered with PCs for People to donate computers to 1,000 students enrolled in Connect2Compete

- Cox is offering a new digital learning platform, called MyFuture, available to Connect2Compete's participants to keep kids engaged in academics this summer

VCTA | Broadband Association of Virginia

VCTA Broadband Resources

Ray LaMura: rlamura@vcta.com
Heidi Cook: hcook@vcta.com

Terry Ellis: Terry_Ellis@comcast.com

Eric Collins: eric.collins@charter.com

Greg Sapp: gregsapp@citizens.coop

Bill Newborg: wnewborg@atlanticbb.com

Barrett Stork: barrett.stork@cox.com

Chris Kyle: chris.kyle@emp.shentel.com

Sarah Holman: sarah@nelsoncable.com

Preparing Virginia Schools Technologically for Virtual Learning

VIRGINIA IS FOR LEARNERS

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT ♥F EDUCATION

Computing Devices Needed for 1:1 and Students without Internet Access at Home
May 2020

Legend:
- 0-10% (29)
- 10-20% (28)
- 20-30% (30)
- More than 30% (42)
- No information or did not report (4)

Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind
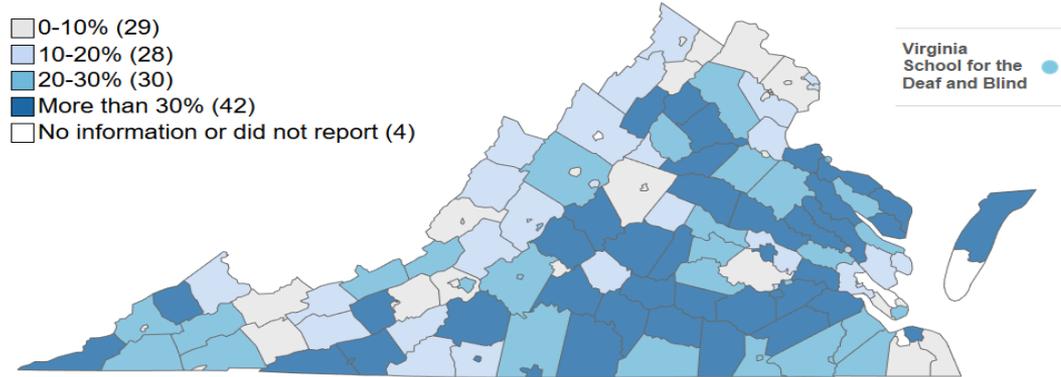
Tech needs to ensure every student can connect to the internet from home	Total Number	Cost
Total computing devices	**427,900**	$128,370,000
Devices for K-5	*281,633*	$84,489,900
Devices for 6-12	*146,267*	$43,880,100
Mobile hotspots	**124,439**	$31million/6 mo. or $43milion/1 yr.

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VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT ♥F EDUCATION

VDOE Technology Support/Outreach

- **Funding Streams**
  - CARES Act Funds
  - GEER Funds- $18 million in grants and $8.9 million intended for VATI Grants
  - Virginia e-Learning Backpack Initiative

- **Regular Communication**
  - Weekly Superintendents calls w/technology a routine topic
  - Monthly division technology meetings- MiFi and computing devices as the primary topic
  - Weekly Microsoft Teams collaboration
  - Office hours and email for individual support

- **Communication with mobile carriers, cable, and computer providers**
  - Assist school divisions w/carrier emergency pricing being offered and supply chain issues

VIRGINIA IS FOR LEARNERS

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT ♥F EDUCATION

VDOE Technology Support/Outreach Cont.

- **Collaboration with Governor's Chief Broadband Advisor**
  - Heat map was created by Chief Broadband Advisor showing where local hotspots are throughout VA
  - Broadband Advisor has been a guest speaker multiple times for Superintendents to discuss internet connectivity and answer questions
  - VATI grant coordination with GEER funds (in process)
  - Mobile telecom calls about providing services for cheapest cost
 - Assisting with GEER grant awards to school divisions

- **Surveys and Data Collections to Determine Needs**
  - Devices and hotspots needed (see slide 2)
  - Current delivery expectations by division (see slides 6 and 8)
  - New student record collection (SRC) fields to determine every student's internet access at home

VIRGINIA IS FOR LEARNERS

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT ♥F EDUCATION

Q2: Has your school division recently placed an order for computing devices such as Chromebooks, tablets, or laptops?   Aug. 13, 2020

Answered: 126   Skipped: 0
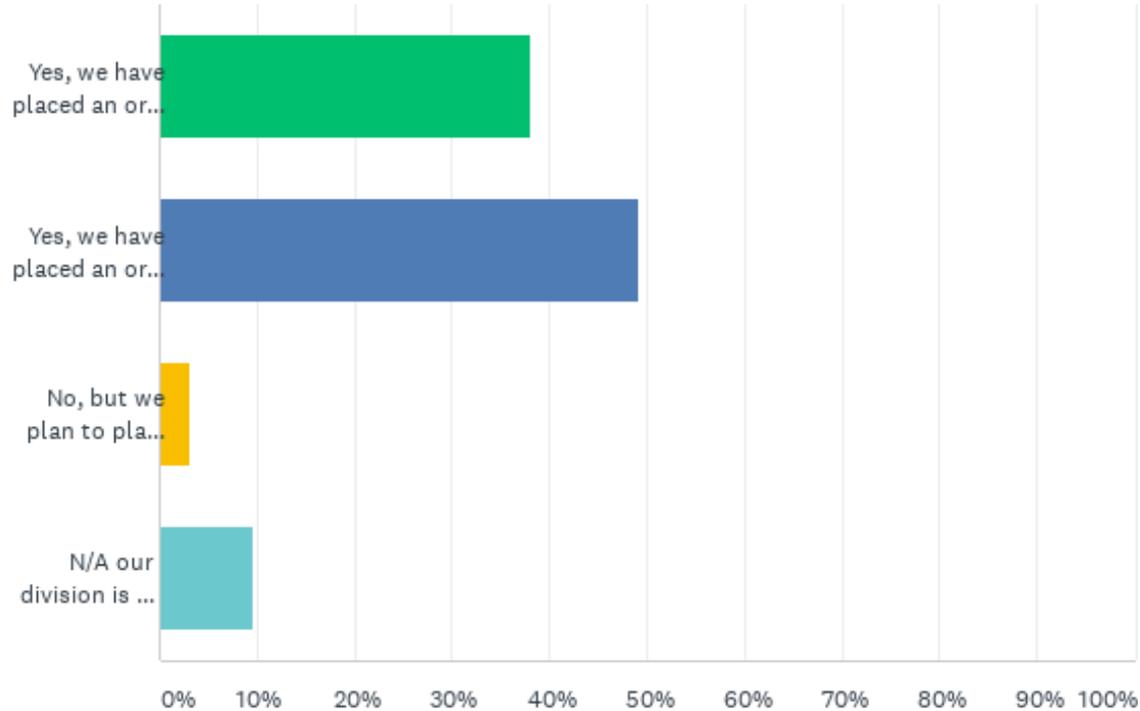
Q2: Has your school division recently placed an order for computing devices such as Chromebooks, tablets, or laptops?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, we have placed an order for computing devices such as Chromebooks, laptops and tablets, and have a delivery date prior to the start of the new school year.	38.10%	48
Yes, we have placed an order for computing devices such as Chromebooks, laptops, and tablets, but we were told by the vendor that the order would not arrive prior to the new school year.	49.21%	62
No, but we plan to place an order for computing devices such as Chromebooks, laptops, or tablets.	3.17%	4
N/A our division is a 1:1 computing program	9.52%	12
TOTAL		126

Q4: Has your school division placed an order for WiFi hotspots? Aug. 13, 2020

Answered: 122   Skipped: 4
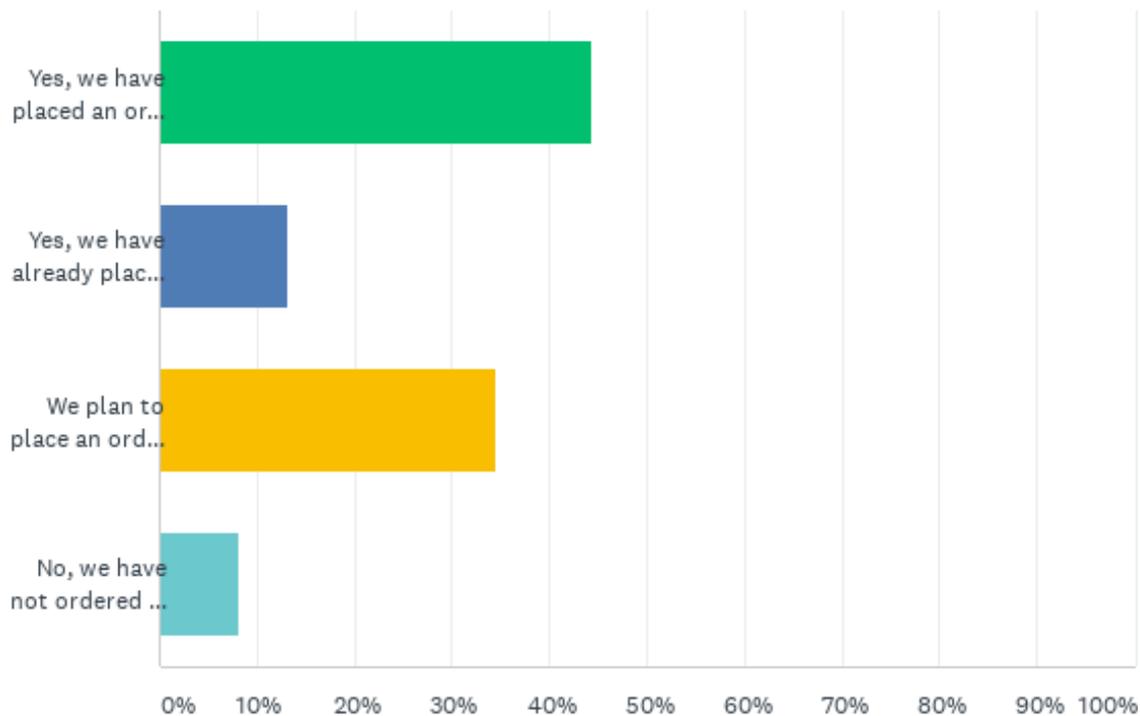
Q4: Has your school division placed an order for WiFi hotspots?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, we have placed an order for WiFi hotspots and were given a delivery date prior to the start of the new school year	44.26%	54
Yes, we have already placed an order for WiFi hotspots and were told by the vendor that we would not receive our order prior to the start of the new school year.	13.11%	16
We plan to place an order for WiFi hotspots from the VISION grant and expect to order them for students that have remote learning needs	34.43%	42
No, we have not ordered any WiFi hotspots, nor do we plan on ordering any for the new school year	8.20%	10
TOTAL		122

VIRGINIA IS FOR LEARNERS

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT ♥F EDUCATION

Contact Information
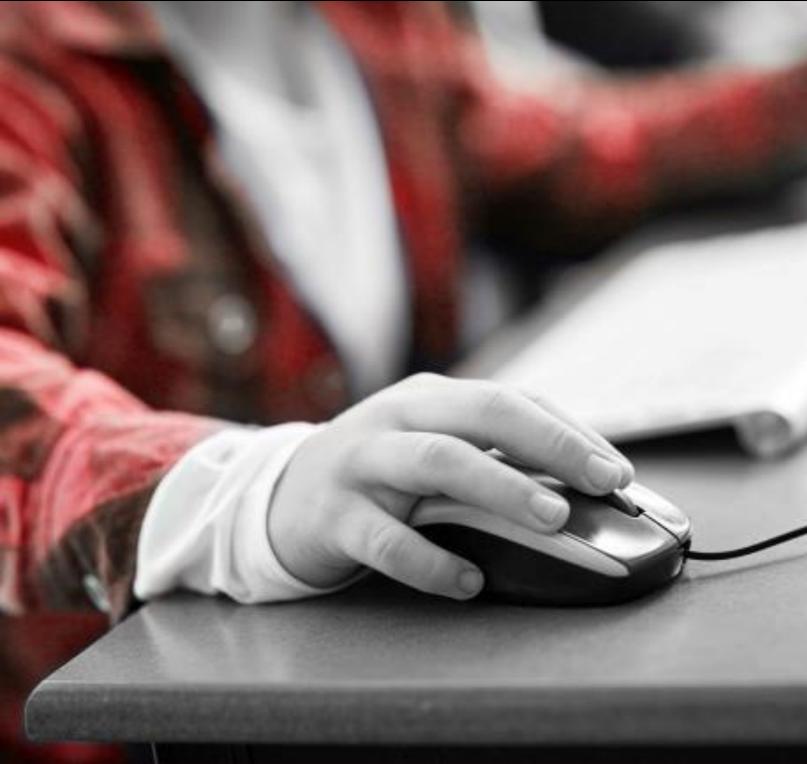
Dave Myers, PhD

Assistant Superintendent of Data, Research and Technology

Virginia Department of Education

dave.myers@doe.virginia.gov

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CARES Act and Broadband in Virginia

Caroline Luxhoj

Telecommunications and Broadband Project Manager

Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

Mike Culp

Director of Information Technology

Albemarle County

CARES Act and Broadband

- The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed by Congress on March 27, 2020.

- Over $2 trillion economic relief package.

- "The CARES Act provides fast and direct economic assistance for American workers, families, and small businesses, and preserve jobs for our American industries."

- The US Department of Treasury released some guidance through its FAQs.

  - "May recipients use Fund payments to expand rural broadband capacity to assist with distance learning and telework?

    Such expenditures would only be permissible if they are necessary for the public health emergency. The cost of projects that would not be expected to increase capacity to a significant extent until the need for distance learning and telework have passed due to this public health emergency would not be necessary due to the public health emergency and thus would not be eligible uses of Fund payments."

VLBN & CARES Act

- The Virginia Local Broadband Network (VLBN) hosted a CARES Act webinar on June 16th.

- Agenda included:
  - Chief Broadband Advisor
  - VACO
  - Library of Virginia
  - Arlington County
  - Fauquier County
  - Open mic

Libraries Leveraging CARES

- Library of Virginia is distributing funds from IMLS to 20 public library systems located in areas that meet a certain criteria.
- Purpose is to address efforts to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19;
  - improve broadband access (e.g. connectivity like hotspots and digital content like eBooks, audiobooks, databases)
  - address unemployment (e.g. online unemployment resources; assistance with job searches; training librarians to provide employment-related programming).

- Additionally, some public libraries are using local CARES money to:
  - buy hotspots and Chromebooks to loan
  - enhance technology and assist students with virtual learning (socially distanced)
  - Laptops for loan
  - Remote printing + Mobile payment options

Localities Leveraging CARES for Broadband

- Albemarle County – see later slides.
- Amherst County
  - Issuing a RFP to find a provider that can expand broadband access. $500,000 from the County and another $800,000 from the schools.
  - [Read more](#)
- Arlington County
  - $500,000 towards Joint County/School Grant Program to provide Comcast's Internet Essentials to APS students.
  - [Read more](#)
- Campbell County
  - $1.4 million towards expanding wireless service.
  - [Read more](#)

8/14/2020

Localities Leveraging CARES for Broadband

- Essex County
  - Planning to contribute some funds towards developing a Broadband Master Plan.

- Fauquier County
  - $750,000 to build more towers to expand wireless service.
  - [Read more](#)

- Halifax County
  - Finalizing plans to utilize CARES funding to expand broadband into unserved areas. No dollar amount yet, but "may approach $1.5 million."

8/14/2020

CARES CRF to Serve Rural Areas during the Public Health Emergency

Supports Rural Areas Distance Learning, Telehealth, and other vulnerable resident life needs due to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

8/14/2020
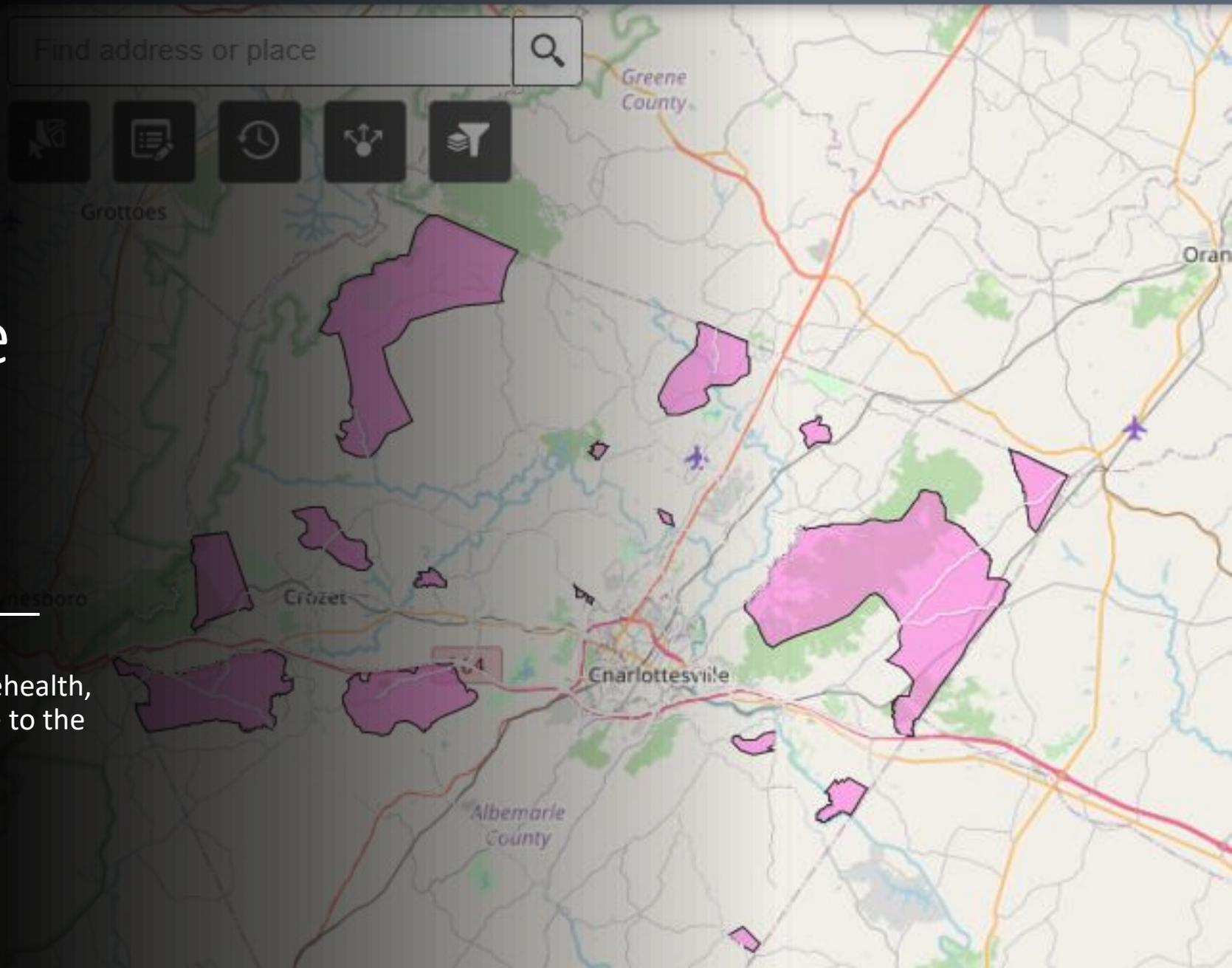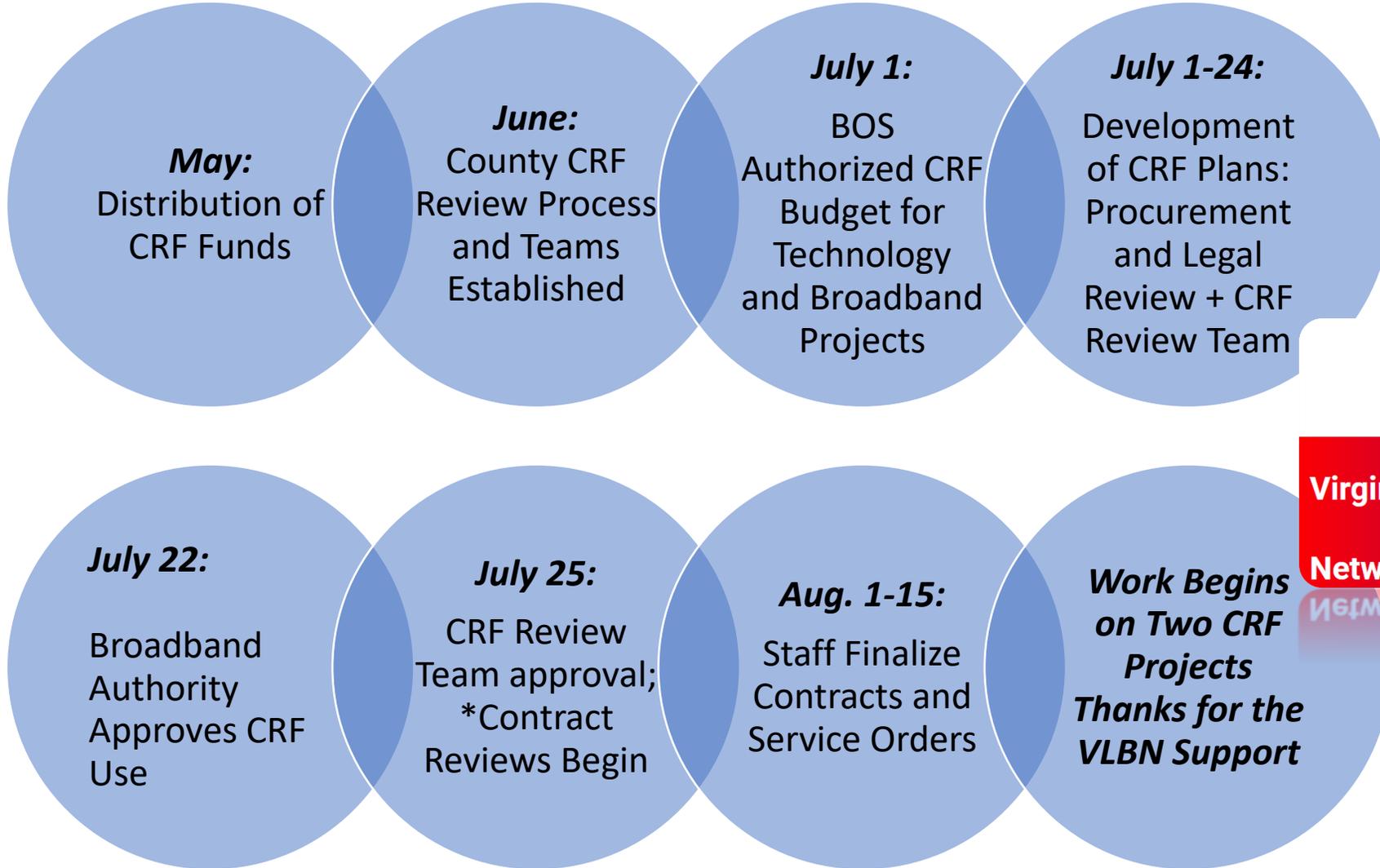
Benefits (Rural Broadband Activation)

- Public Health Emergency Support for Underserved Broadband Identified Locations in Rural Areas

- CARES CRF Compliancy Approved

- Regional Project: Albemarle, Greene, and Louisa Counties

- Ongoing Costs covered by the Provider

Benefits
(Community Center Public Wi-Fi)

- Public Health Emergency Support for Underserved Broadband Identified Locations in Rural Areas

- CRF Compliancy Approved

- Community Center Connected to Broadband to address Public Health Emergency

- Wi-Fi Access Points Strategically Located to serve Outdoor Needs (Parking Lot and Large Covered Pavilion)