

CLOSE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE: KIMBERLY MARCUS

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PROVIDE UNIVERSAL K-12 EDUCATION IN MEDIA, TELECOM AND INTERNET LITERACY, INCLUDING SKILLS, PROFICIENCY AND POLICY

- Increased broadband access and adoption in unserved and underserved areas are pivotal to efforts by Congress and executive agencies to retool core standards and improve science, technology, engineering and mathematics (“STEM”) education and advanced skills training levels.
- Increased broadband adoption has been shown to impact employment, education, literacy and civic participation.
- American public school students today receive essentially the same science education offered fifty years ago, with only the addition of newly discovered scientific facts in the fields of earth science, biology, chemistry, and physics.
- This curriculum is inadequate for a service and knowledge-based economy.
- Inadequate technology and science education for increasingly large segments of the population deprives technology companies and entrepreneurs of the highly skilled workforce and tech savvy consumer base necessary to make their enterprises thrive without resorting to off-shoring and seeking other markets.
- Children must receive training focused on Internet and technology skills, proficiency, and policy, and suggested that this education must begin in grade school.

ENHANCE SDB GOALS AND ELIMINATE ENTRY BARRIERS TO MBE PARTICIPATION IN ROUNDS 2 AND 3 OF THE BTOP AND BIP PROGRAMS

- Minority-owned businesses enterprises (MBEs), socially and economically disadvantaged businesses (SDBs) and new entrants need access to spectrum, access to capital, and access to opportunity.
- Contract requirements and procurement practices that can increase participation by MBEs and SDBs, include dispersal of grants and loan funds at or prior to the start of projects instead of staggered or post-completion payment schedules.
- Government agencies should not penalize SDBs and MBEs by imposing excessive years-in-business, bonding, or large project experience requirements, or by “bundling” programs without a compelling need to do so.
- Priority should not be given to grant proposals that address several purposes because it would encourage “bundling”—a significant market entry barrier.
- High priority should be assigned to funding contracting and subcontracting SDBs and MBEs, including those with established connections to low-income and other vulnerable communities to be served, as well as Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Native American Serving Institutions, and Asian American Serving Institutions.