



February 25, 2021

Via ECFS

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street, NE
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Wireline Competition Bureau Seeks Comment on Emergency Broadband Connectivity Fund Assistance, WC Docket No. 20-445 – Ex Parte Notification

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On Tuesday, February 23, 2021 Christopher Wood of LGBT Tech spoke by telephone with Travis Litman and Kate Black of the Office of Acting Chairwoman Rosenworcel. LGBT Tech spoke about the importance of including smartphones as one of the choices outlined under “connected devices” in the EBB program and discussed the importance of smartphones to the LGBTQ+ community, especially for those who find themselves in housing insecure positions.

LGBT Tech shared recent quotes and statistics from its PowerOn program that distributes technology through 47 LGBTQ+ centers in 32 US states and US territories. Specifically, LGBT Tech shared impact information received during COVID and the use of technology during COVID.

LGBT Tech shared PowerOn program statistics and testimonials from different partners around the importance of smartphones for disadvantaged members of the LGBTQ+ community:

- Quote from a transgender resource center of New Mexico. "COVID has squeezed our trans family living on the streets even more than they were squeezed before. Access and safety are constant concerns for the folks who come to our drop-in center and having the basic necessities is a daily struggle. Phone access is one of those fundamental needs that many of our participants don't have. The technology grant from PowerOn has ensured that more of our folks have access to a phone and is a critical help."

LGBT Technology Institute

- Washington D.C.'s own Whitman-Walker Clinic has distributed 12 of LGBT Tech's smartphones during COVID to individuals who had no other way to stay connected with supportive services.
- In January 2021, the PowerOn program was able to connect 748 individuals with technology to be able to access services like peer-to-peer support groups, mental health services, medical and health services, case management, job readiness and community food banks. These facts come directly from LGBT Tech's end of year 2020 PowerOn COVID Mini grant awarded to 17 centers in December of 2020.

LGBT Tech underscored the importance of including smartphones in the definition of a "connected device" when it comes to the EBB program and any future programs based of the facts and figures we are receiving from our community nationwide.

Sincerely,

Christopher Wood

Christopher Wood
Executive Director
LGBT Tech