



June 5, 2026



Youth in Washington: Students on the 2026 Foundation for Rural Service Youth Tour pose at the FCC. More than 120 high schoolers visited Washington, D.C., this week to tour our nation's capital and learn about rural broadband.

House Passes FY2027 Spending Bill with Key Broadband Funding

The U.S. House of Representatives **approved** the Fiscal Year 2027 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, which includes funding for several broadband programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Among the programs funded are the Rural Utilities Service's ReConnect Loan and Grant Program, Rural Telecommunications Loan Program, Community Connect Grant Program, and Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program. Earlier this year, NTCA advocated for lawmakers to support continued funding for these programs after several were eliminated or reduced in the president's budget proposal.

The Senate must now pass its Fiscal Year 2027 USDA funding bill.

NTCA, NRECA Urge FCC to Keep Lifeline Verification Centralized

In a joint filing with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), NTCA **told** the FCC this week that a broad range of stakeholders supported keeping Lifeline eligibility verification centralized through the Universal Service Administrative Co. (USAC) and the National Verifier rather than assigning new verification responsibilities to service providers.

The groups argued that functions such as identity verification, consent verification, and any collection of full Social Security numbers should remain with USAC to reduce compliance burdens, privacy risks, and costs for carriers. They also urged the commission to continue treating any monthly subscriber bill payment as sufficient evidence of subscriber engagement rather than imposing additional usage-tracking requirements.

Help Shape the Future of USF: Data Survey Extended to June 12

As Congress and the FCC consider the future of the Universal Service Fund (USF), it is important that policymakers have access to the most updated and refined data.

NTCA, working with CostQuest Associates, is extending its ongoing member data collection effort aimed at better capturing the costs of deploying and operating broadband networks in rural areas for providers of all sizes to help prompt and inform further refinement of the FCC's cost model. The deadline to participate is now June 12. A link to the survey was emailed to NTCA ILEC members this

week. If you have any questions or concerns, contact NTCA Senior Vice President of Policy and General Counsel [Justin Faulb](#).



Stay Engaged: Take Part in Upcoming NTCA Fly-In Advocacy Days

The NTCA Government Affairs team continues to [offer](#) fly-in advocacy days for members to connect directly with members of Congress and federal agencies. With major policy issues in Washington, D.C., still affecting broadband deployment and long-term connectivity, these meetings remain an important way to stay involved. Fly-ins are scheduled for July 14, August 5 and September 29.

To learn more or RSVP, contact NTCA Director of Government Affairs [Brendan Dailey](#).



Make Your Summer Community Engagement Activities Even Smarter: Join 'Office Hours' with SRC

Are you making the most of your community engagement activities with Smart Rural Community (SRC) tools and resources? Join the SRC team on June 10 at 2 p.m. ET for an Office Hours webinar — an open, informal session focused on helping you better leverage SRC resources to support your marketing, communications and community development efforts.

[REGISTER](#)

NEED TO KNOW

NTCA [joined](#) other industry associations in a letter to the secretaries of the U.S. Department of the Treasury and U.S. Department of Commerce, raising concerns about an imbalance in the memory chip market that could drive near-term price increases and disrupt key supply chains. The groups urged the Trump Administration to take steps to expand memory chip capacity, support affected industries and monitor market conditions more closely.

FCC Chairman Brendan Carr released several proposals this week for discussion at the commission's June 25 open meeting, including a [review of the E-Rate program](#), [measures to streamline permitting](#) for wireline broadband infrastructure deployment and an order and [further notice](#) on NG911 to modernize the FCC's reliability rules to reduce the risk of outages. The commission's tentative agenda is available [here](#).

Cartesian this week released its latest “**The State of US Broadband**” report, offering analysis of changes in network deployment and service availability across the broadband marketplace during the second half of 2025.

NTCA members can receive a discounted rate to attend the **Rural Wireless Infrastructure Summit**, hosted by the Rural Wireless Association and Rural Independent Network Alliance, June 22-24 in Steamboat Springs, Colo. The **agenda** includes a keynote presentation and panel discussion featuring NTCA Senior Vice President of Policy and General Counsel Justin Faulb. NTCA members can use the code “**200OFF**” when registering for the discounted rate.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development is accepting applications for \$17 million in **Community Connect grants** to expand high-speed internet access in underserved rural communities. Applications are due June 29.

Applications for the **2026 Smart Rural Community Showcase Awards** are now being accepted. Please complete the application and submit it, along with any supporting materials, by June 15.

Nominations for the **NTCA Excellence Awards** are now open until July 6. The awards honor individuals making a meaningful impact across the rural broadband industry, and winners will be recognized at the 2027 RTIME.

Registration for the 10th annual **Women in Telecom Fly-in** on July 22 in Washington, D.C., is now open. The program will feature fundraisers for two female members of Congress, discussions with industry leaders, professional development and networking opportunities.

OUTREACH

NTCA CEO **Mike Romano** participated in a fireside chat with Karen Jackson-Furman, CEO of West Kentucky & Tennessee Telecommunications Cooperative (Mayfield, Ky.), to open the Tennessee Broadband Association annual convention in Franklin, Tenn.

Romano also delivered a virtual welcome to attendees of the 2026 Management Conference hosted by TCA and Pinion in Colorado Springs, Colo.

NTCA Vice President of Policy and Industry Innovation **Josh Seidemann** gave a federal update to the Oregon Broadband Association in Seaside, Oregon.

NTCA Senior Director of Government Affairs **Makenzie Novak** gave a virtual federal affairs update to the South Carolina Broadband Cooperatives.

WEBINARS

Policy Talk: The Future of the Universal Service Fund and the Rural Broadband Landscape

June 8 | 2 p.m. ET

Sponsored by NCSC

Join NTCA for an industry update as policymakers on Capitol Hill and at the FCC continue examining the future of the Universal Service Fund (USF), intercarrier compensation, broadband mapping, and other regulatory and legislative priorities. NTCA CEO Mike Romano will discuss advocacy work impacting the industry alongside NTCA's new Senior Vice President of Policy and General Counsel Justin Faulb, who will share his perspective on the evolving policy landscape and the association's priorities moving forward.

REGISTER

WEBINAR: June 'Office Hours' With Smart Rural Community™

June 10 | 2 p.m. ET

Join the Smart Rural Community (SRC) team for an Office Hours webinar, an open, informal conversation designed for SRC providers who want to connect, ask questions and share ideas. There is no set agenda for this session; instead, bring your questions, challenges, and successes and talk directly with the SRC team and fellow providers in a collaborative, peer-to-peer

setting. Whether you are looking for practical guidance, inspiration from peers or a quick update on what is available to support your community efforts, Office Hours is your chance to join the conversation.

REGISTER



© 2026 NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association
4121 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 1000 | Arlington, VA 22203
(703) 351-2000 | www.ntca.org
[Privacy Statement](#)

This email was sent to . Want to change how you receive these emails?
[Unsubscribe from this list](#) | [Manage Preferences](#) | [Unsubscribe from all messages](#)