

## **Non-Profits' Consensus Broadband Fund Design Principles**

The undersigned non-profit organizations have prepared this set of principles to guide the Commission's design of the broadband fund. We agree that these principles reflect an appropriate policy direction for the fund, and encourage the Commission to ensure that the outcomes of this proceeding meaningfully incorporate them.

1. The Commission should prioritize rural and remote communities. Funding should be set aside for unserved and underserved Indigenous and Official Language Minority communities to ensure their needs are met. The Commission should require applicants to demonstrate that they have obtained the support of the communities they propose to serve through meaningful consultation during the development of the proposal. The Commission should require successful applicants to continue to consult and engage throughout construction and operation.
2. The Commission should require applicants to provide wholesale access to transport infrastructure at reasonable rates.
3. The Commission should ensure community initiatives are able to compete on a level playing-field. Any requirements to demonstrate financial capacity and experience should either be achievable for community initiatives or apply flexibly where such initiatives (and only such initiatives) are concerned. Funding should be distributed to community initiatives on a basis which provides sufficient cash flow during deployment.
4. The Commission must address affordability. The Commission should require applicants to propose prices reasonably comparable to urban areas. The Commission should seek to address the needs of low-income households.
5. The Commission should promote a high standard of service.
6. If the Commission decides to proceed with an assessment criteria-based evaluation of funding applications, the Commission should establish a third-party administrator with a multi-stakeholder governance board including representatives of northern and indigenous communities. That administrator should help produce a plain language application guide, provide advice regarding the application process, and share best practices.
7. The Commission should use the best geographic data available, which will generally be household-level data, to avoid excluding partially unserved or underserved geographic units.
8. Eligible costs should not be limited to capital costs. Applicants should be able to request operational subsidies where it would not otherwise be possible to sustainably serve the community at affordable rates.
9. The use of public funds for broadband funding projects calls for a high level of scrutiny, enforcement, and accountability for awarded funding. The fund administration process and funding conditions should include monitoring and public reporting. The Commission should impose effective sanctions where applicants fail to meet the commitments made in their proposal.

Signatories:

**Blue Sky Economic Development Corporation**

**Cybera**

**First Mile Connectivity Consortium**

**National Campus and Community Radio Association** (In relation to those matters within its mandate)

**National Pensions Federation and Public Interest Advocacy Centre**

**OpenMedia**