
Holly Groschner

Vermont Legislature

Senate Finance
Committee

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Former General Counsel, VTA

30 Years Telecom Experience:

- Director, Downs Rachlin & Martin, utilities
- Vice President, Crown Castle International
- CEO, Vermont PBS

And nonprofit volunteer:

- Equal Access to Broadband, Board Chair
- EC Fiber (CUD), Governing Board

Why am I here?
Broadband for
low-income
homes in the
ECFiber
network.

- **ECFiber pilot program: Equal Access to Broadband**
- **Mission based: serving the whole community**
- **Builds on ECFiber's experience in COVID**
- **Uses existing network**
- **To work with Schools and Social Services agencies**
- **Organized a board of state experts – expert in school technology, education. And social services.**
- **And then ARPA happened, and the question was raised: how can we use BIG money to solve affordability?**

TODAY affordability is left to commercial carriers. There is no strategy.



WHERE, WHAT
PROVIDER?

No one lets
you know.



FINANCIAL
MANAGEMENT
NEW COST

Fear, no
guidance.



SUBSIDY
UNKNOWN:

Carriers in
Control of
access



WAIT FOR
PERMISSION:

Delivery
unknown



TECH REFRESH:

Requires
tech advice

Summary from this morning's testimony

- + Uptake on subsidy programs are minimal relative to eligibility -20%
- + Federal subsidy programs are temporary
- + Carriers are willing to participate in subsidies where its good for business
- + Subsidy programs are internet based, and connection requires technology
- + The federal Lifeline program is built for Carrier convenience



Community RELATIONSHIP is key for uptake, but unsupported

An effective Subsidy delivery
strategy addresses

Trust/ Access

Change/Technology

Confidence

Lifestyle Realities

Economic Advice

Goal: Build a bridge to subsidized service

CREATE PROCESS
FOR
ENGAGEMENT

DATA TOOL FOR
AGENCIES &
SCHOOLS

FORMALIZE
CASEWORKER
TRAINING

BUILD SUBSIDIES
WITH GRANTS,
GIFTS & ISP/ CUD
NET REVENUE

SHARED COST OF
FUNDING &
ADMIN

Based on our work, we agree....



Emergency Access
requires funds and
all kinds of tech



Subsidy rates are
possible for big
ISPs to provide



Affordability
funding is limited



Based on our work we disagree....



Access is not
a one-time
event



Subsidy
programs based
on ISP work is
not user or local
ISP friendly..



ISP programs
come with
variables &
conditions –
arrears issues!



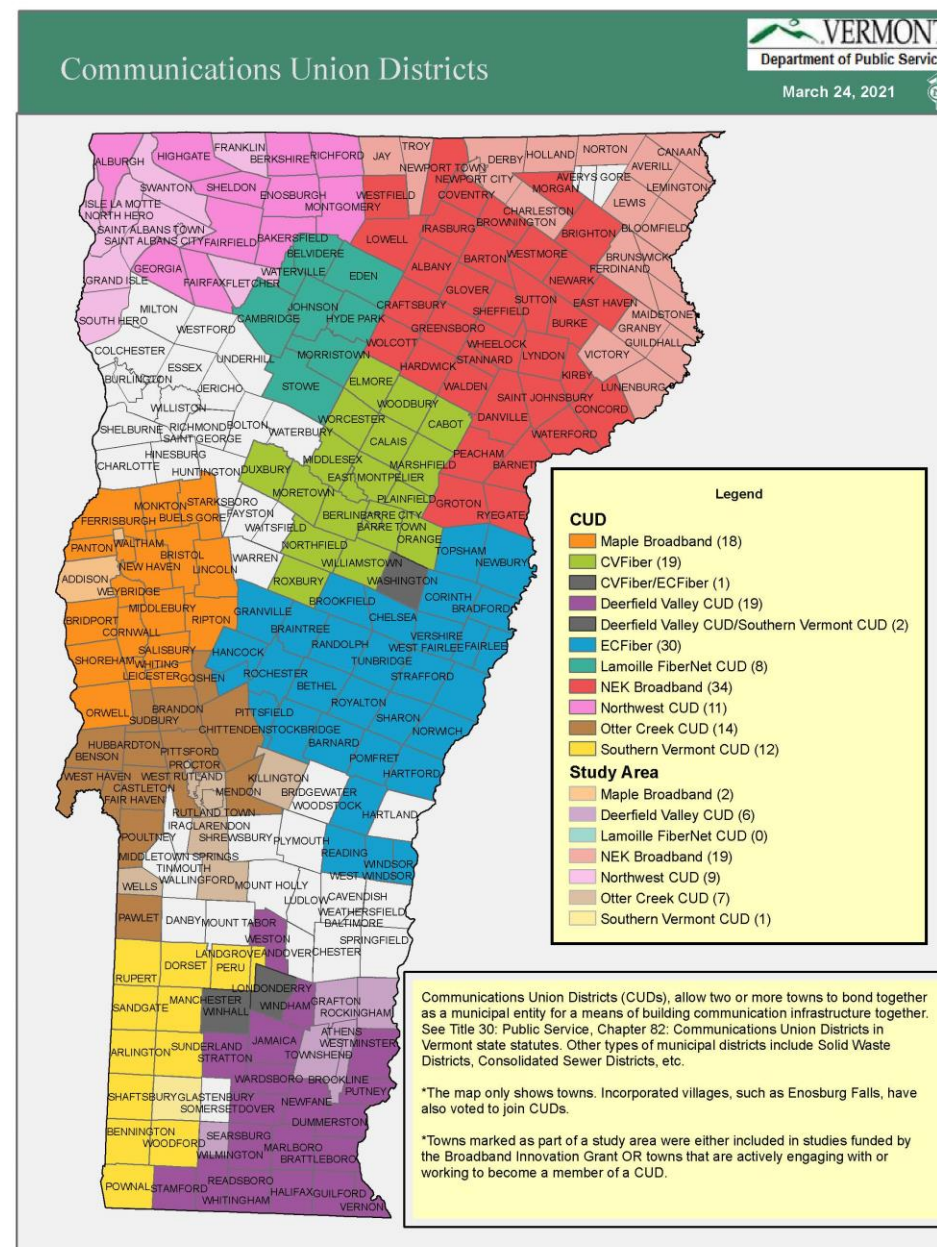
Mandated
discounts
network-wide
have inequitable
impact and may
chill build out.

AFFORDABILITY RECOMMENDATION: Plan and pay for Affordability beyond ARPA.

Partner with Community Action
Agencies and school districts
for a durable subsidy delivery
model.

Build CUD and ISP networks
with subsidy strategies that
leverage public investment.

Equal Access to
Broadband Inc.
we're not connected
until everyone can afford broadband



FCC Emergency Broadband Benefit

- A \$50/month subsidy
- Mobile providers, virtual providers, and cable providers

Vermont

Broadband Provider Name

AT&T

Champlain Broadband, LLC

Comcast Cable Communications, LLC

Cricket Wireless LLC

human-I-T

Selectel, Inc.

Verizon Communications Inc.

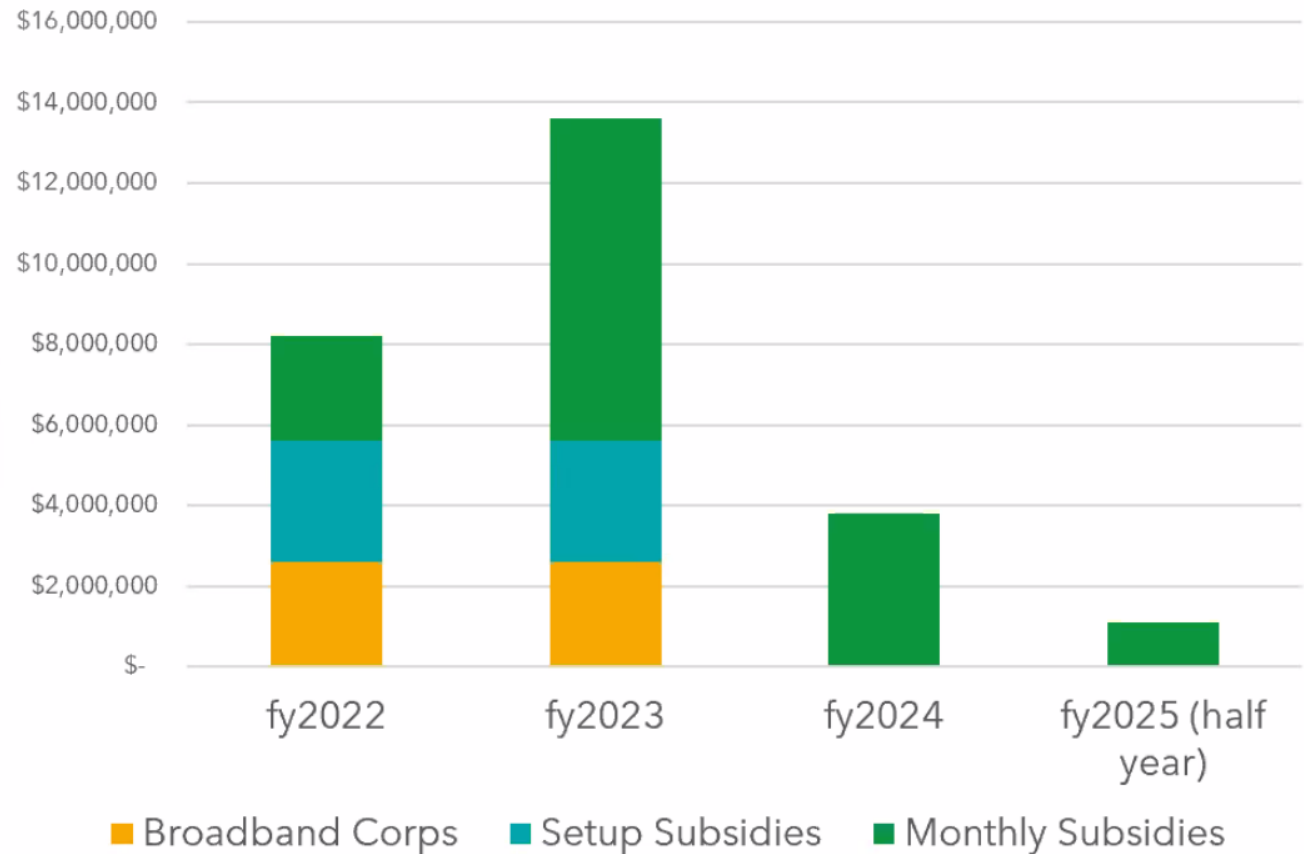
<https://www.fcc.gov/emergency-broadband-benefit-providers>

Broadband Equity

Now

Broadband
Subsidies
Sunset at the
End of 2024

State Expenditures from CARES and ARPA Funds



Subsidies Can't Sunset and include CUDs.

If building the broadband network is job one, making it affordable is job two.... and the job is **never** done.

Of the households that do not have access to the internet, **77% believe that internet service is too expensive or is not necessary for school**

US Dept of Ed

https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cch.asp

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