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## FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

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### NCSL COVID-19 WEBINAR — COVID-19: BROADBAND AND TECHNOLOGY ISSUES

**Webinar Series.** On April 22, 2020, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) held a webinar related to the impact of COVID-19 on broadband and technology issues throughout the United States. The information in this article is current as of the date of the webinar. The webinar is posted on the NCSL's [website](#).

**Federal Actions.** On March 27, 2020, the federal government passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which included the following broadband and technology funding provisions:

- \$25.0 million for distance learning and telemedicine.
- \$100.0 million in additional grants under the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Utilities Service Broadband Deployment Pilot Program, originally created in 2018 with \$600.0 million in funding.
- \$200.0 million for the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Connected Care Pilot Program supporting telehealth programs to support health care providers responding to COVID-19.
- \$45.0 million to expand Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) information technology and communication capabilities and expanded capacity for response coordination efforts.
- \$9.0 million for Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) information analysis and for impacted critical infrastructure coordination.

**State Actions.** During the 2020 legislative session, 33 states and Puerto Rico introduced bills for statewide broadband infrastructure expansion, and 35 states and Puerto Rico introduced bills for broadband availability and usage expansion programs into rural areas. Nineteen states have active commissions, councils, or task forces that act as a statewide broadband office or agency organizing broadband deployment and usage throughout the individual states.

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