The SHLB Coalition is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) advocacy organization that supports open, affordable, high-quality broadband connections for anchor institutions and their surrounding communities. The SHLB Coalition is based in Washington, D.C. and has a diverse membership of commercial and non-commercial organizations from across the United States. To learn more, visit www.shlb.org.
Mission: “For **Every Anchor Institution in the country to have affordable, high-quality broadband that is open and accessible to the surrounding community.”

_A word from our leadership...

Dear SHLB Community,

This past year was a remarkable one here at the SHLB Coalition. We reached an important milestone by celebrating our 10th anniversary, and our membership levels climbed to an all-time high. We contributed to three pieces of legislation, including the LIFT America Act and the Broadband DATA Act, and participated in over 15 federal rulemakings — an unprecedented number. We announced the very first SHLB Anchor Awards, recognizing excellence in anchor connectivity. The 9th Annual SHLB Conference was a huge success, featuring keynotes by two FCC Commissioners and the acting administrator of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. To put it simply, SHLB made great progress in advancing our mission in 2019.

At this very time last year, SHLB’s sustainability looked uncertain. Our financial support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation sunsetted in 2018, meaning that 2019 was the first year SHLB operated as a self-sustaining organization. Fortunately, we received generous support from our 176 members, our event and corporate sponsors, and 45 donors. We are deeply grateful for the kindness shown by them and by supporters like you.

Membership engagement is a key part of SHLB’s strategic plan. Throughout 2019, we enhanced the quality of our biweekly membership calls, our policy groups, our webinars, the membership portal, and other benefits. Our annual survey shows that SHLB membership is becoming more valuable each year. We will maintain our dedication to improving membership and offering more services in 2020.

We stand on the threshold of a crucial year for anchor institutions. The issue of broadband access has received significant attention in the 2020 presidential election, but the focus is often limited to residential communities and businesses. Anchor institutions must be a part of the broadband policy conversation, and SHLB will ensure they are not forgotten. We hope you will continue supporting our efforts as we ramp up our advocacy and membership engagement even further in 2020.

Sincerely,

John Windhausen Jr.
Executive Director
SHLB Coalition

Eric Brown
Chairman of the Board
SHLB Coalition
AnchorNets 2019: The 9th Annual SHLB Conference

SHLB hosted its ninth annual Conference in Washington, D.C. The flagship event drew over 300 broadband champions who came to discuss the most pressing policy issues facing community anchor institution connectivity. The three-day event opened with a rousing keynote from FCC Commissioner Brendan Carr, who discussed the importance of telehealth solutions for rural communities. FCC Commissioner Geoffrey Starks delivered the second keynote of the event. His initial remarks celebrated the many ways that libraries serve their constituents. Former NTIA Head Larry Irving joined Commissioner Starks on stage, moderating a Q&A to help the SHLB community get to know the FCC’s newest Commissioner. Acting Administrator of the NTIA Diane Rinaldo spoke to SHLB showgoers on day three, providing an update on NTIA’s mapping pilot, the BroadbandUSA program, and the agency’s ongoing efforts to make broadband ubiquitous for all Americans. The 10th Annual SHLB Conference is on track to be an even bigger success and will take place from October 14 to 16, 2020.

10 Years of Connecting Communities

In celebration of SHLB’s 10th Anniversary, over a hundred members of our community gathered for a friendly debate about the future of the Universal Service Fund. Former FCC Chairman Dick Wiley and Larry Irving moderated the conversation with Former Chairman Tom Wheeler and Former Commissioners Jonathan Adelstein, Rachelle Chong, and Mignon Clyburn.

Improving Rural Healthcare with Broadband and Telehealth

On June 10, in a crowded room in the Senate Dirksen building, rural healthcare providers shared their concerns about the Rural Health Care (RHC) program at a SHLB-hosted briefing. Staff from Senator Ron Wyden’s (D-Ore.) office opened the program by sharing that the Senator is drafting a joint Senate letter to the FCC urging it to complete the rulemaking proceeding to repair the RHC program. Speakers included Kristi Walker, senior project manager, Community Care of West Virginia; Brian Doerr, senior vice president of information technology, Community Hospital Corporation; Whittney Walker, director of telecom funding, Community Hospital Corporation; Jon Cochrane, board chair, Bethel Family Clinic; Nic Powers, CEO, Winding Waters Community Health Centers; and Jeff Mitchell, attorney, Fletcher, Heald and Hildreth. SHLB and the event speakers asked Senators to sign onto Senator Wyden’s letter, which went to the FCC on July 30 with 13 signatures.

Window of Opportunity: How EBS Spectrum Can Close the Digital Divide

On March 7, SHLB hosted “Window of Opportunity” on Capitol Hill to show lawmakers the many ways that organizations and anchor institutions can address the digital divide by using the Educational Broadband Service (EBS). Katherine Messier, executive director of Mobile Beacon, spoke of her organization’s use of EBS to connect anchors and nonprofits at an affordable rate of $10/month. Northern Michigan University Vice President Gavin Leach introduced NMU’s Educational Access Network, which connects over 60,000 K-16 students and lifelong learners in Michigan’s remote Upper Peninsula. MuralNet CEO Mariel Triggs explained that EBS enabled affordable connectivity for the Havasupai Tribal Nation, situated in the depths of the Grand Canyon. A Better Wireless CEO Mitch Koep shared a WISP-in-a-box EBS solution that could provide his unconnected community with affordable internet. Koep’s granddaughter read the audience a letter, describing the impact of the homework gap on herself and classmates.
The Economic Benefits of Keeping the “E” in “EBS”

The SHLB Coalition partnered with Telecom Advisory Services' Dr. Raul Katz to release new research findings on the economic and social effects of our proposal to award EBS licenses to educational institutions and Tribal Nations. The report compared SHLB's EBS proposal with the idea of auctioning spectrum, and found that licensing EBS to schools and Tribal Nations would reduce the digital divide by 18.38 percent as well as close the homework gap by 29.6 percent. Dr. Katz presented the research at the National Collaborative for Digital Equity’s summit, hosted at the National Education Association in May.

A Check-up on Kansas City’s Digital Divide

Kansas City has risen as a leader in digital equity and inclusion over the last several years. The Kansas City Public Library and the SHLB Coalition contracted with Dr. John Horrigan to evaluate KC’s progress in closing its digital divide. Dr. Horrigan found that KC has achieved significant gains, having increased their broadband adoption by 16.5 percent from 2013 to 2018. However, KC began at a lower level of broadband adoption than similar cities and now rests in the middle of the pack. Unfortunately the story for KC’s low-income families is disappointing. Broadband adoption for households with an annual income below $20,000 in KC is 54 percent, which lags behind the national average of 59.3 percent and significantly trails the 65.3 percent average of 10 comparable cities. The study’s findings reinforce the idea that closing the digital divide is not only about making broadband available, but also affordable.

And the Anchor Goes To...

At AnchorNets 2019, the SHLB Coalition announced the recipients of the inaugural Anchor Awards. Each year, SHLB will recognize three awardees - a school, a library, and a health entity - for their exemplary work in line with SHLB’s mission of ensuring broadband access for all. Awardees must be anchor institutions who demonstrate exceptional commitment to broadband, leading to real-world, tangible results for their communities. The first recipients were Santa Fe Indian School, the North Carolina Telehealth Network Association, and the Springfield-Greene County Library District (pictured on the right).

Santa Fe Indian School (SFIS) has spent the last five years closing the digital divide for its campus. The market provided limited and expensive internet choices, so the school worked with local higher education partners, the city, and county to bring fiber optics to Santa Fe.

North Carolina Telehealth Network Association (NCTNA) offers high-quality, discounted broadband services to health providers who serve some of the poorest counties in rural NC. Thanks to NCTNA’s broadband, providers offer life-saving health services that would otherwise be out-of-reach.

Springfield-Greene County Library District introduced the Library Express West, a 24/7 library kiosk in an underserved area of Springfield, Missouri. Now library patrons can access free Wi-Fi at any time on any day. Their access is no longer constrained to the library’s business hours.
**E-RATE**

**Amortization Requirement** - In February, the FCC waived and proposed to eliminate the amortization requirement for special construction projects in the E-rate program. SHLB brought this issue to the Commission’s attention with an ex parte filing in October 2018, which the FCC cited twice in the NPRM. Chairman Pai thanked SHLB on Twitter.

**Category Two Order** - In December, the FCC made the Category Two Budget Approach a permanent fixture of the E-rate program. The decision provides schools and libraries greater funding certainty and flexibility to meet their connectivity needs. The Report and Order cites SHLB’s joint comments multiple times.

**Our Advocacy**

- Comments to the FCC on the E-rate program amortization suspension requirement.
- Ex parte submission to the FCC on the Form 470 drop-down menu.
- Joint comments to the FCC regarding the Texas Carriers’ overbuilding petition.
- Joint comments to the FCC regarding E-rate Category Two
- Letter to the California Public Utilities Commission regarding draft resolution T-17666

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**RURAL HEALTHCARE**

**Our Advocacy**

- Comments to the FCC re: ongoing issues with the RHC program.
- Reply comments to the FCC on “Promoting Telehealth in Rural America.”
- Ex parte letter to the FCC and the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) re: the operation of the RHC program.
- Two ex parte letters to the FCC asking it to postpone adoption of the “Promoting Telehealth in Rural America” Report and Order.
- Petition for Reconsideration of the “Promoting Telehealth in Rural America” Report and Order.

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**SPECTRUM**

**Our Advocacy**

- Reply comments to the FCC re: unlicensed use of the 6 GHz Band.
- Joint letter to Congress calling for C-Band spectrum auctions.
- Joined Public Interest Spectrum Coalition comments re: 3.7 GHz Band.
- Letter to the FCC re: unlicensed use of the 6 GHz Band.

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**EBS**

**Our Advocacy**

- Ex parte to FCC re: “Transforming the 2.5 GHz Band.”
- Joint petition to FCC re: “Transforming the 2.5 GHz Band.”
- Joint letter to FCC requesting priority window for rural educators in “Transforming the 2.5 GHz Band.”
- Comments to FCC re: “Transforming the 2.5 GHz Band.”
- Petition to FCC for Reconsideration of “Transforming the 2.5 GHz Band.”

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**ADDITIONAL**

**LIFT America Act** - SHLB collaborated with House Commerce Committee Chairman Frank Pallone’s staff to authorize funding for broadband to anchors in the LIFT America Act.

**Broadband DATA ACT** - SHLB wrote a letter to the House Commerce Committee asking that they ensure the Broadband DATA Act directs the FCC to map anchor institutions. Representative Anna Eshoo introduced the SHLB letter into the record of the Committee mark-up of the bill, leading House Commerce to grant SHLB’s request in the report language.

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**UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND**

**Our Advocacy**

- Joint statement to FCC opposing USF cap proposal.
- Ex parte re: simplifying the application process for USF.
- Comments opposing FCC proposal to cap USF.

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*Learn more about our advocacy for anchor institution broadband at www.shlb.org/policy.*
**FAST FACTS**

- 100 percent of SHLB members would recommend SHLB membership to another organization.
- 96 percent of SHLB members say that SHLB is “as valuable” or “more valuable” than other membership organizations they belong to.

**MEMBERSHIP COMPOSITION**

*As of December 31, 2019*

- **R&E Networks, Nonprofit Providers**: 14%
- **Public Interest Groups & Foundations**: 6%
- **Consultants & Lawyers**: 21%
- **Library Organizations**: 18%
- **Health Organizations & Telehealth Networks**: 10%
- **Education Organizations**: 9%
- **Commercial Providers**: 12%
- **Local & State Govt Dept or Agencies**: 9%
- **Public Media**: 1%

**MEMBERSHIP**

- 176 **Members** in 44 **States**

**NEW MEMBERS IN 2019**

- 34

**MEET THE 2019 COALITION**

A Better Wireless, NISP LLC • Access Humboldt • ADS Advanced Data Services, Inc. • Adtec, Inc. • Alaska Communications • Alaska Library Association • Alaska Primary Care Association • Alaska State Library • American Association of Community Colleges • American Library Association • Arizona State Library • Arkansas e-Link • Arkansas Research and Education Optical Network • Association of Rural and Small Libraries • Benton Institute for Broadband & Society • Boston Public Library • Boulder Valley School District • Broadband Catalysts • Broadband Law Group • Broadband Legal Strategies • Califa • California IT in Education • California K-12 High Speed Network • Central Skagit Sedro-Woolley Library • Chattanooga Public Library • Chief Officers of State Library Agencies • Chippewa Valley Internetworking Consortium • Cisco • Clarity Solutions, Inc. • Colorado Educational Broadband Coalition • Colorado Hospital Association • Colorado State Library • Columbus Metropolitan Library • Common Spirit Health • Connect Americans Now • Connected Nation • ConnectME Authority • Consortium for School Networking • Conterra Networks • Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California • Crown Castle • CRW Consulting • CSM Consulting • CTC Technology & Energy • Cyuhoga County Public Library • Denver Public Library • EdTechnologyFunds • Educational Professional Services • Education Partners Solution, Inc. • EducationSuperHighway • ELAE Enterprises, LLC • Epic Communications • eRate 360 Solutions, LLC • E-rate Central • E-rate Consulting, Inc. • E-rate Online • E-rate Provider Services, LLC • E-rate Services, LLC • ESC Region 12 • Essam Consulting Group LLC • ex2 Technology • Fatbeam, LLC • Free Library of Philadelphia • Funds For Learning • GCI • GeoLinks • Gigabit Libraries Network • Healthcare Funding Connection • HealthConnect Networks • Health Information Exchange of Montana • Idaho Commission for Libraries • Illinois Telehealth Network • Independent Health Network • Indiana Rural Health Association • Indiana’s Optical Network • Infinity Communications & Consulting • Infinium Broadband Services • Institute for Local Self-Reliance • Internet2 • Janice Meyers Educational Consulting • Johnson County Library • Kajeet • Kansas City Public Library • Kansas Health-e Broadband • Kellogg & Sovereign LLC • Kent County Government • Keystone Initiative for Network Based Education • Kansas Department of Commerce • Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13 • Law Office of Rachelle Chong • Libraries of Middlesex Automation Consortium • Library of Michigan • Lonestar Education and Research Network • Los Angeles Public Library • Merit Network • Microsoft • Mighty River, LLC • Minnesota Office of Broadband Development • Mobile Beacon • Mobile Citizen • Montana State Library • MOREnet • MuralNet • Nashville Public Library • National Collaborative for Digital Equity • National Digital Inclusion Alliance • Netsync • Network Nebraska • New England Telehealth Consortium • New Jersey State Library • New Mexico Broadband Program • New Mexico Primary Care Association • New York State Education Research Network • Next Century Cities • NJEdge.net Inc. • NM Public School Facilities Authority • NM Telehealth Alliance • Northampton Community Television • North Carolina Research and Education Network • North Carolina Telehealth Network Association • OARNet • Ocean State Higher Education and Administrative Network • OCHIN • Oklahoma Corporation Commission • OneNet • On-Tech Consulting • Oregon Business Development Department • Pacific Northwest Gigapop • Palmetto Care Connections • Para River Group LLC • Pioneer Broadband • Port of Ridgefield • Port of Skagit • Ruckus Networks • San Diego County Library • Sanford/Good Samaritan Society • Schlow Centre Region Library • School of Information: San Jose State University • SERC • Solix, Inc. • Sonic • Sonoma County Library • Southern Ohio Health Care Network • Sprint • SRS Consulting LLC • State Educational Technology Directors Association • State E-rate Coordinators Alliance • Telconnections, Inc. • The Quilt • The Seattle Public Library • Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library • Town of New Shoreham • Unite Private Networks • University of Alaska-Fairbanks • University of Nevada, Reno • Office of Information Technology • University of New Hampshire • Urban Libraries Council • Utah Education and Telehealth Network • Utah’s Governor’s Office of Economic Development • Velocity Fiber • Virginia Society for Technology in Education • Voqal • VST Services, LP • WANRack • Washington Library Association • Washington State Library • Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction • Whoff • Wiley Rein LLP • WiscNet • Wisconsin Public Instruction • Womble Bond Dickinson (US) LLP • Wyoming State Library • Yavapai County ESA E-rate • Zayo Group
SHLB always strives to raise the visibility of issues impacting community anchor institution broadband. As our presence in top-tier media outlets grows, so does public awareness about the challenges anchors face in obtaining the high-quality broadband they need.

SHLB was mentioned in the following outlets in 2019:

- WSJ
- B+C
- arstechnica
- Communications Daily
- Broadband Breakfast
- Wired
- The Journal
- Politico Pro
- Fierce Wireless
- Roll Call
- EdScoop
- JDSupra
- Bloomberg Law
- Light Reading
- Healthcare Dive
- The Hechinger Report

SHLB was cited in 212% more news stories in 2019 than in 2018.
**Financial Snapshot**

The SHLB Coalition’s primary financial support comes from membership dues and event registrations and sponsorships. We also receive smaller but important support from foundations and from our new annual giving program. Membership dues came in stronger than expected in 2019, allowing us to meet our budget goals on an overall budget of about $750,000.

Having successfully made the transition to being self-supporting, we are now focused on growth. We are seeking additional financial support in 2020 to hire two additional staff to expand our membership and advocacy efforts.

**Thank You!**

We’re grateful to all of the individuals and organizations that contributed to the SHLB Coalition in 2019 as sponsors, donors, and beyond.

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