There are some variations in the use of distance education at Minority Serving Institutions compared to other schools. For example, while Minority Serving Institutions tend to offer at least one distance education course at the same rate as other schools, they differ in how many courses are offered and which students take the courses. Also, like other schools, larger Minority Serving Institutions tend to offer more distance education than smaller schools, and public schools tend to offer more distance education than private schools. However, Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Tribal Colleges generally offer fewer courses than other schools, and a smaller percentage of minority students take such courses.

Minority Serving Institutions consider two main factors in deciding whether to offer distance education. The first is distance education’s compatibility with the school’s preferred teaching method. Many schools that offered no distance education had a strong preference for a classroom-based approach. The second is resources—schools offering little or no distance education had limited technology and support personnel. Also, Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Serving Institutions viewed distance education as a lower priority compared to expanding technology usage in the classroom. By contrast, Tribal Colleges gave distance education higher priority, reflecting the greater geographic dispersion of their students.

Education could strengthen its monitoring efforts of the Title III and V programs by expanding its existing system. Currently, the monitoring efforts for tracking the progress of technological improvements are more complete for Hispanic Serving Institutions than for the other Minority Serving Institutions. Education also lacks good baseline information on technology capacity at Minority Serving Institutions. Expanding current efforts to include such data would provide a basis for measuring the progress being made by Minority Serving Institutions.