

Call for BEAD Applications

Grant Overview

The federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was signed into law on November 15, 2021. It provides approximately \$65 billion for broadband nationally. The Office of Broadband Development (OBD) at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) was selected as Minnesota's Eligible Entity to administer the state's funding for broadband, including the funding for broadband called the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) program. At the federal level, the BEAD program is being administered by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce. The NTIA has, and continues to, issue comprehensive guidance that the state must follow in administering the grant funding.

Funding Availability

OBD anticipates that approximately \$626 million of Minnesota's BEAD allocation of \$651,839,368 will be available for broadband infrastructure deployment by selected and NTIA approved subgrantees.

The grant scoring (where applicable), subgrantee selection and final awards are outlined in Minnesota's BEAD Initial Proposal Vol. 1 and 2 available here: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/bead/> as well as guidance documents from NTIA available here: <https://broadbandusa.ntia.gov/funding-programs/broadband-equity-access-and-deployment-bead-program> . Subgrantees selected will be submitted to NTIA for approval as part of the state's Final Proposal due September 4, 2025.

- Funding available to be awarded to selected Grantees will be approximately \$626 Million.
- There is no limit on the number of applications a single applicant can submit.
- As required under BEAD, OBD must recommend funding be awarded in a manner that ensures that every NTIA-approved BEAD eligible unserved and underserved location will be served. The list of BEAD eligible locations will be published on OBD's website on or prior to the date the application window opens for the first subgrantee selection round.

Funding will be allocated to projects to serve all BEAD eligible unserved and underserved locations. Applications from entities that meet the prequalification requirements will be approved for inclusion in the Final Proposal if the entity is the only applicant to serve the eligible locations. If there are multiple applications to serve eligible locations, then the applications will be reviewed per the process approved by NTIA in Minnesota's approved Initial Proposal Volume 2, which generally includes scoring under the NTIA approved scoring rubric (Available in Minnesota's NTIA-approved Volume 2 in Appendix B here:

https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/sites/default/files/2024-12/BEAD_Resource_Index_12_23_24.pdf.)

OBD expects to submit to NTIA Minnesota's Final Proposal by September 4, 2025. After submission, approval of Minnesota's Final Proposal is by NTIA on NTIA's timeline. If selected, subgrantees will be able to incur eligible expenditures from the date of this RFP until the end date of the fully executed contract. However, expenditures will only be reimbursable upon the awarded subgrantee's grant contract agreement being fully executed.

Minimum Requirements

Per NTIA program guidelines, applicants must meet minimum requirements to demonstrate their technical, operational, managerial and financial qualifications in order to be fully considered for this grant opportunity. To demonstrate their qualifications, applicants must provide documentation to demonstrate they meet these requirements by completing the BEAD prequalification process. Information required to be submitted for the prequalification process is available here: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/pre-qualifications-guidance_tcm1045-663372.pdf. These prequalification requirements must be met by every applicant in order to submit an application for a specific infrastructure project to serve BEAD eligible unserved and underserved locations. Projects funded by BEAD funds must comply with all applicable Federal and State environmental laws.

Priorities

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to ensure fairness, precision, equity and consistency in competitive grant awards. This includes implementing diversity and inclusion in grant-making.

[Policy 08-02](#) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities. The BEAD program is a federal program operating under federal guidelines to bring broadband infrastructure to all unserved and underserved locations. OBD will prioritize state policies as it is able while fulfilling the federal requirements.

This grant per NTIA requirements is intended to serve:

- Every unserved and underserved location in Minnesota, as defined by NTIA.

Grant outcomes will include:

- The successful completion of executed contracts over NTIA's allowed four-year construction period, so that unserved and underserved locations in Minnesota have access to high-speed internet.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants for this program include private companies, cooperatives, nonprofit organizations, public-private partnerships, local governments, an Indian tribe, public utilities, private utilities, public utility districts, or other internet service providers (ISPs). Partnerships and consortium applications will be allowed (e.g., two providers partnering to serve a project area).

Eligible Locations: Broadband development projects must include only locations identified as eligible for BEAD funding following the BEAD Challenge process and approved by NTIA as the Final List of Eligible Locations for BEAD funding (and subject to ongoing deduplication). Generally, locations lacking a Reliable Broadband Service at speeds of at least 25Mbps download and 3Mbps upload are considered unserved; and locations having a Reliable Broadband Service at speeds of at least 25Mbps download and 3Mbps upload but not at or above 100Mbps download and 20Mbps upload are considered underserved.

Matching Funds Requirement: The applicant must provide for the funding not covered by the grant with matching funds in the form of cash. The match can come from any private and/or public sources that allow for such use and are available to the applicant. The grant funding period begins upon the date this RFP is issued. Upon NTIA approval of Minnesota's Final Proposal, the state will execute grant contract agreements with the approved subgrantees. While expenditures are eligible for reimbursement from the date of the RFP, no reimbursements will be made until a grant contract is fully executed.

Competitive Priorities

Consistent with NTIA's requirements of the [BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice](#) (Policy Notice), preliminary winners for grant rounds conducted prior to the Policy Notice will be rescinded and one additional subgrantee selection round for every BEAD-eligible location (the "Benefit of the Bargain Round") will take place. This Benefit of the Bargain Round or "BEAD Restructured Round", will permit all applicants – regardless of technology employed or prior participation in the program – to compete on a level playing field undistorted by the non-statutory regulatory burdens eliminated in the Policy Notice. All subgrantee selection will comply with the terms of this Policy Notice.

Collaboration

Multi-organization collaboration is allowed as listed above in Eligible Applicants. Each entity in the collaboration is required by NTIA to provide the information required by NTIA to demonstrate their technical, managerial, financial and operational capabilities.

Selection Criteria and Weight

As required by IIJA, the Office of Broadband Development (OBD) shall give priority to proposals that meet the definition of a Priority Broadband Project. Consistent with NTIA's Restructuring Policy Notice, The term "Priority Broadband Project" has been redefined and now means a project that provides broadband service at speeds of no less than 100 megabits per second for downloads and 20 megabits per second for uploads, has a latency less than or equal to 100 milliseconds, and can easily scale speeds over time to meet the evolving connectivity needs of households and businesses and support the deployment of 5G, successor wireless technologies, and other advanced services.

Any applicant may seek to have the OBD treat its application as a Priority Broadband Project regardless of the technology used. The applicant's project, however, must still meet the required speed and latency standards set forth in the statute and the NOFO and demonstrate that it meets the additional statutory criteria, including that the project can easily scale speeds over time to support evolving connectivity needs and the deployment of 5G and successor wireless technologies. Applicants must provide supporting documentation sufficient for the Eligible Entity to assess the network application and determine that the proposed network architecture for each specific project area meets this standard.

Selection Criteria: As required by NTIA's Restructuring Policy Notice, the Office of Broadband Development (OBD) will score competing applications using the following criteria:

Primary Criteria. In deciding among competing applications covering the same general project areas, Eligible Entities must choose the option with the lowest cost based on minimal BEAD Program outlay.

Minimal BEAD Program Outlay. OBD must select the combination of project proposals with the lowest overall cost to the Program. This may involve selecting a proposal that is not the lowest-cost option for a given set of BSLs but is part of the combination of selected projects with the lowest overall cost to the Program.

When comparing competing proposals, OBD shall assess the total BEAD funding that will be required to complete the project (i.e., the total project cost minus the applicant's proposed match) and the cost to the Program per location (i.e., the total BEAD funding that will be required to complete the project divided by the number of BSLs the project will serve).

Secondary Criteria. If an application to serve the same general project area proposes a project cost within 15% of the lowest-cost proposal received for that same general project area on a per BSL basis, the OBD must evaluate such competing applications based on the following three criteria. The relative weighting of these three criteria shall be at the discretion of the Eligible Entity:

Speed to Deployment. The prospective subgrantee's binding commitment to provision service by a date certain that is earlier than four years after the date on which the subgrantee will receive the subgrant from the Eligible Entity subject to contractual penalties to the OBD. Greater consideration can be awarded to prospective subgrantees promising an earlier service provision date.

Speed of Network and Other Technical Capabilities. OBD may weigh the speed, latency, and other technical capabilities of the technologies proposed by prospective subgrantees.

Preliminary/Provisional Subgrantees. For locations where OBD have already identified preliminary or provisionally selected subgrantees, OBD may give additional weight to those applications in the Benefit of the Bargain Round. As required by IIJA, OBD must still ensure that subgrantees have a demonstrated record of, and plans to continue compliance with, Federal labor and employment laws. A subgrantee will satisfy this requirement through self-certification of compliance with Federal labor and employment laws. Fair labor practices shall no longer be considered within the scoring criteria. Likewise, the other secondary criteria identified in the NOFO (affordability, equitable workforce development and job quality, open access, local and tribal coordination), as well as any additional scoring criteria imposed by the OBD, shall no longer be considered as award selection criteria.

Required financial and grantee capacity review

The required financial and grantee capacity review follow those required by NTIA in administration of this federal program and are available in the prequalification material available here

https://mn.gov/deed/assets/pre-qualifications-guidance_tcm1045-663372.pdf. To the extent a state requirement is not already duplicated in what NTIA already requires, it has been added.

Questions:

- Questions may be submitted by phone or email to deed.broadband@state.mn.us or 651-259-7610.
- All answers will be posted within five business days at <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/bead/> under BEAD FAQs.

Application Content

Prequalification is separate from the application. The application is available to those that meet the prequalification requirements, as listed below.

Prequalification Submission:

All prequalification material must be submitted no later than 4:30 p.m. Central Time, on July 21, 2025. The applicant will incur all costs incurred in submitting prequalification information.

Application Submission:

For entities that meet the prequalification requirements, OBD will accept BEAD grant applications in three subrounds as outlined in the NTIA approved Initial Proposal Volume 2. The three application subrounds are anticipated to have the timelines as outlined below, but all timelines are dependent on NTIA approval of the Final List of BEAD Eligible Locations, NTIA guidelines, funding availability.

All applications must be submitted by 1:30 p.m. Central Time, on the date noted below for each subround. Applications must be submitted through the Grant Application Portal. Late applications will not be considered but can be resubmitted for consideration in a subsequent subround, should there be any rounds remaining. The applicant will incur all costs incurred in applying to this RFP with the exception that some costs may be eligible expenditures should an applicant be selected for an award and which results in a fully executed contract.

Applications must be submitted electronically to <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/bead/>

Review Process and Timeline

The OBD review team will evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline. Negotiations with anticipated selected subgrantees will be necessary to ensure that all eligible locations are included in a project recommended for funding in the Final Proposal while not exceeding the total funding allocated to the state. By law, NTIA will review all OBD recommendations as presented in the singular Final Proposal and NTIA is responsible for final approval of award decisions. All dates tentative and subject to change due to NTIA guidance.

RFP posted on DEED web siteFebruary 14, 2025

Questions on RFP due no later than 4:30 pm Central TimeMarch 31, 2025

Subround 11a: *(Applications rescinded per NTIA BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice.)*

Subround 11b and Subround 11c: *(Subrounds obsolete per NTIA BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice.)*

BEAD Restructured Round: *(New round as required per NITA BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice)*

Publish restructured eligible locations:.....June 30, 2025

Application portal opens for BEAD Restructured Round:July 14, 2025

Questions on subround BEAD Restructured Round due:.....July 21, 2025

FAQs and webinar:see webpage

BEAD Restructured Round applications due no later than 1:30pm Central Time:July 24, 2025

BEAD Restructured Round application deconfliction for inclusion in the Final Proposalbegins July 25, 2025

Final Proposal:

Applicants submitted to Commissioner for ReviewAugust 20, 2025

NTIA Required Public Comment Period on BEAD Final Proposal:August 28, 2025

Submit Final Proposal to NTIA for approval:August 28, 2025

Upon NTIA approval of Final Proposal, grant agreements with subgrantees included in the Final Proposal can be fully executed.

Conflicts of Interest

State grant policy requires that steps and procedures are in place to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers per [Minn. Stat. §16B.98 Subd. 2-3](#) and [08-01 Conflict of Interest in State Grant-Making Policy](#).

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- a grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the Department due to competing duties or loyalties
- a grantee's or applicant's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties

In cases where a conflict of interest is in question or disclosed, the applicants or grantees will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to, revising the grant work plan or grantee duties to mitigate the risk, requesting the grant applicant to submit an organizational conflict of interest mitigation plan, disqualification from eligibility for the grant award, amending the grant, or termination of the grant contract agreement.

Public Data

Because this is a federal program, data will be made public as provided by BEAD guidelines and state law.

Grant Provisions

The BEAD Program is a federal grant program subject to NTIA's guidance and approval. Minnesota has an Initial Proposal, Volume 1 and 2, that has been approved by NTIA to guide how OBD will implement the BEAD program. The Initial Proposal and other documents related to the BEAD program in Minnesota can be found on OBD's website here: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/bead/> NTIA also continues to issue guidance. A list of NTIA available resources for the BEAD program can be found here: <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/funding-programs/broadband-equity-access-and-deployment-bead-program> including the Notice of Funding Opportunity, Frequently Asked Questions, and a State Broadband Office Resource Index which is updated as new guidance is issued by NTIA. More information on BEAD provisions is available here: [Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment \(BEAD\) Program | Internet for All](#)

Eligible Program Costs:

This grant award is a "fixed amount subaward" as defined in 2 CFR § 200.201 where the major purpose of the subaward is a broadband infrastructure project and will be administered by the State pursuant to the Uniform Guidance Policy Notice published by NTIA on December 26, 2023, titled "Policy Notice: Tailoring the Application of Uniform Guidance to the BEAD Program". Subrecipients will be required to both submit evidence of actual costs and meet specific performance milestones.

Ineligible costs include those costs that are unallowable under the applicable federal guidance. The following costs are specifically identified as prohibited under the BEAD Program:

- (a) Prohibition on Use of Grant Funds for Covered Communications Equipment or Services under the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act of 2019. Award funds may not be used to procure or obtain any

covered telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment as described in 2 C.F.R. § 200.216, including covered telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment provided or produced by entities owned or controlled by the People's Republic of China and telecommunications equipment produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities.)

A profit, fee, or other incremental charge above actual cost incurred by an Subrecipient is not an allowable cost under this Program. This prohibition does not extend to program income, which Subrecipient may retain without restriction, including retaining program income for profit.

Prohibition on Use of Grant Funds to Support or Oppose Collective Bargaining. The Subrecipient may not use grant funds, whether directly or indirectly, to support or oppose collective bargaining.

Accountability and Reporting

Subgrantees awarded funding through the BEAD Grant Program will be subject to all reporting requirements as set forth by OBD and NTIA. Guidance is still being developed at NTIA for the full list of reporting requirements.

Grant Payments

Per [Policy 08-08](#) reimbursement is the preferred method for making grant payments. OBD intends to use a reimbursement process for the BEAD program. All grantee requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget. The State shall review each request for reimbursement against the approved grant budget, grant expenditures to-date and the latest grant progress report before approving payment. Grant payments shall not be made on grants with past due progress reports unless DEED-OBD has given the grantee a written extension.

Grant Monitoring

[Minn. Stat. §16B.97](#) and [Policy 08-10](#) Grant Monitoring require the following:

- One monitoring visit during the grant period on all state grants of \$50,000 and higher
- Annual monitoring visits during the grant period on all grants of \$250,000 and higher
- Conducting a financial reconciliation of grantee's expenditures at least once during the grant period on grants of \$50,000 and higher. For this purpose, the grantee must make expense receipts, employee timesheets, invoices, and any other supporting documents available upon request by the State.

Per NTIA requirements, OBD will also conduct Milestone Monitoring.

Subgrantee Bidding Requirements:

Subgrantees (whether for profit government, or municipalities), by submitting a proposal, certify that they are in compliance with all federal grant requirements including but not limited to 2 C.F.R. 180, 1200, and 1326 regarding suspension, debarment, or declared ineligibility.

Pursuant to 2 C.F.R 200.321, all necessary steps will be taken to assure that minority businesses, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are used when possible.

The subgrantee must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred in MN: [Suspended/Debarred Vendor Information](#)

Audits

Pursuant to 2 C.F.R Part 200, the subgrantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. Pursuant to NTIA requirements, this requirement will last for a minimum of ten years from the grant contract agreement end date, receipt, and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

Affirmative Action and Non-Discrimination requirements for all Grantees:

- A. The grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. [Minn. Stat. §363A.02](#). The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and persons with disabilities.
- B. The grantee must not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of physical or mental disability in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. The grantee agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment, and otherwise treat qualified disabled persons without discrimination based upon their physical or mental disability in all employment practices such as the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment, advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship. Minnesota Rules, part [5000.3500](#)
- C. The grantee agrees to comply with the rules and relevant orders of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights issued pursuant to the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

Voter Registration Requirement:

The grantee will comply with [Minn. Stat. §201.162](#) by providing voter registration services for its employees and for the public served by the grantee.

Contact Information: For more information about this RFP, contact:

Office of Broadband Development

Jennifer Frost

State/Federal Programs and Compliance Manager

Email: Jennifer.frost@state.mn.us

Attachments: Applications will be submitted to <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/bead/>

Addendum 4 – Updates to reflect NTIA’s BEAD Restructuring Policy Guidance issued on June 6, 2025

Note: The RFP was amended for the fourth time on July 8, 2025. Substantive updates have been made to several sections to comply with NTIA’s BEAD Restructuring Policy Guidance issued on June 6, 2025. Sections impacted include: Funding Availability, Eligibility, Competitive Priorities, Selection Criteria and Weight, Pre-qualification Submission, Submission, and Review Process and Timeline subsections which rendered dates from previous (Subround 11a) and planned subrounds (Subrounds 11b and 11c) obsolete, and introduced a new required Restructured BEAD Round. All dates continue to be tentative and subject to change due to NTIA guidance. The following sections and subsections were changed.

Funding Availability

OBD anticipates that approximately \$626 million of Minnesota’s BEAD allocation of \$651,839,368 will be available for broadband infrastructure deployment by selected and NTIA approved subgrantees.

The grant scoring (where applicable), subgrantee selection and final awards are outlined in Minnesota’s BEAD Initial Proposal Vol. 1 and 2 available here: <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/bead/> as well as guidance documents from NTIA available here: <https://broadbandusa.ntia.gov/funding-programs/broadband-equity-access-and-deployment-bead-program> https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/sites/default/files/2024-12/BEAD_Resource_Index_12_23_24.pdf. Subgrantees selected will be submitted to NTIA for approval as part of the state’s Final Proposal due September 4, 2025 ~~October 3, 2025~~.

Funding available to be awarded to selected Grantees will be approximately \$626 Million.

~~By state law, a single project cannot request more than \$10 Million in grant funding, but~~ There is no limit on the number of applications a single applicant can submit.

As required under BEAD, OBD must recommend funding be awarded in a manner that ensures that every NTIA-approved BEAD eligible unserved and underserved location will be served. The list of BEAD eligible locations will be published on OBD’s website on or prior to the date the application window opens for the first subgrantee selection round.

Funding will be allocated to projects to serve all BEAD eligible unserved and underserved locations. Applications from entities that meet the prequalification requirements will be approved for inclusion in the Final Proposal if the entity is the only applicant to serve the eligible locations, ~~the cost does not exceed the Extremely High Cost Per Location Threshold and Minnesota has an adequate allocation of BEAD dollars to include the project.~~ If there are multiple applications to serve eligible locations, then the applications will be reviewed per the process approved by NTIA in Minnesota’s approved Initial Proposal Volume 2, which generally includes scoring under the NTIA approved scoring rubric (Available in Minnesota’s NTIA-approved Volume 2 in Appendix B here:

https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/sites/default/files/2024-12/BEAD_Resource_Index_12_23_24.pdf.)

OBD expects to submit to NTIA Minnesota’s Final Proposal by September 4, 2025 ~~October 3, 2025~~. After submission, approval of Minnesota’s Final Proposal is by NTIA on NTIA’s timeline. If selected, subgrantees will be able to incur eligible expenditures from the date of this RFP until the end date of the fully executed contract. However, expenditures

will only be reimbursable upon the awarded subgrantee's grant contract agreement being fully executed. ~~Applicants that are not selected for a BEAD award or are selected but do not result in achieving a fully executed contract, are not eligible for any reimbursement.~~

Minimum Requirements

Per NTIA program guidelines, applicants must meet minimum requirements to demonstrate their technical, operational, managerial and financial qualifications in order to be fully considered for this grant opportunity. To demonstrate their qualifications, applicants must provide documentation to demonstrate they meet these requirements by completing the BEAD prequalification process. Information required to be submitted for the prequalification process is available here: https://mn.gov/deed/assets/pre-qualifications-guidance_tcm1045-663372.pdf. These prequalification requirements must be met by every applicant in order to submit an application for a specific infrastructure project to serve BEAD eligible unserved and underserved locations. Projects funded by BEAD funds must comply with all applicable Federal and State environmental laws.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants for this program include private companies, cooperatives, nonprofit organizations, public-private partnerships, local governments, an Indian tribe, public utilities, private utilities, public utility districts, or other internet service providers (ISPs). Partnerships and consortium applications will be allowed (e.g., two providers partnering to serve a project area).

Eligible Locations: Broadband development projects must include only locations identified as eligible for BEAD funding following the BEAD Challenge process and approved by NTIA as the Final List of Eligible Locations for BEAD funding (and subject to ongoing deduplication). Generally, locations lacking a Reliable Broadband Service at speeds of at least 25Mbps download and 3Mbps upload are considered unserved; and locations having a Reliable Broadband Service at speeds of at least 25Mbps download and 3Mbps upload but not at or above 100Mbps download and 20Mbps upload are considered underserved. ~~NTIA defines Reliable Broadband Service as including service deployed over licensed or Licensed by Rule fixed wireless and wired service delivered over fiber or coax.~~

Matching Funds Requirement: The applicant must provide for the funding not covered by the grant with matching funds in the form of cash. The match can come from any private and/or public sources that allow for such use and are available to the applicant. The grant funding period begins upon the date this RFP is issued. Upon NTIA approval of Minnesota's Final Proposal, the state will execute grant contract agreements with the approved subgrantees. While expenditures are eligible for reimbursement from the date of the RFP, no reimbursements will be made until a grant contract is fully executed

Competitive Priorities

Consistent with NTIA's requirements of the [BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice](#) (Policy Notice), preliminary winners for grant rounds conducted prior to the Policy Notice will be rescinded and one additional subgrantee selection round for every BEAD-eligible location (the "Benefit of the Bargain Round") will take place. This Benefit of the Bargain Round or "BEAD Restructured Round", will permit all applicants – regardless of technology employed or prior participation in the program – to compete on a level playing field undistorted by the non-statutory regulatory burdens eliminated in the Policy Notice. All subgrantee selection will comply with the terms of this Policy Notice. ~~the first subround of BEAD applications will focus on the deployment of fiber networks with subsequent application subrounds open to alternative technologies. Because OBD must ensure that all BEAD eligible unserved and underserved locations are provided with some type of internet services, while the planned three application subrounds will be staggered, all subgrantees selected for inclusion in the Final Proposal will not be determined until the third application window closes and applications are reviewed.~~

Selection Criteria and Weight

As required by IIJA, the Office of Broadband Development (OBD) shall give priority to proposals that meet the definition of a Priority Broadband Project. Consistent with NTIA's Restructuring Policy Notice, The term "Priority Broadband

Project” has been redefined and now means a project that provides broadband service at speeds of no less than 100 megabits per second for downloads and 20 megabits per second for uploads, has a latency less than or equal to 100 milliseconds, and can easily scale speeds over time to meet the evolving connectivity needs of households and businesses and support the deployment of 5G, successor wireless technologies, and other advanced services.

Any applicant may seek to have the OBD treat its application as a Priority Broadband Project regardless of the technology used. The applicant’s project, however, must still meet the required speed and latency standards set forth in the statute and the NOFO and demonstrate that it meets the additional statutory criteria, including that the project can easily scale speeds over time to support evolving connectivity needs and the deployment of 5G and successor wireless technologies. Applicants must provide supporting documentation sufficient for the Eligible Entity to assess the network application and determine that the proposed network architecture for each specific project area meets this standard.

The review committee will be reviewing only those applications that propose to serve the same or overlapping unserved and/or underserved locations on a 100-point scale as required and approved by NTIA.

Selection Criteria: As required by NTIA’s Restructuring Policy Notice, the Office of Broadband Development (OBD) will score competing applications using the following criteria:

Primary Criteria. In deciding among competing applications covering the same general project areas, Eligible Entities must choose the option with the lowest cost based on minimal BEAD Program outlay.

Minimal BEAD Program Outlay. OBD must select the combination of project proposals with the lowest overall cost to the Program. This may involve selecting a proposal that is not the lowest-cost option for a given set of BSLs but is part of the combination of selected projects with the lowest overall cost to the Program.

When comparing competing proposals, OBD shall assess the total BEAD funding that will be required to complete the project (i.e., the total project cost minus the applicant’s proposed match) and the cost to the Program per location (i.e., the total BEAD funding that will be required to complete the project divided by the number of BSLs the project will serve).

Secondary Criteria. If an application to serve the same general project area proposes a project cost within 15% of the lowest-cost proposal received for that same general project area on a per BSL basis, the OBD must evaluate such competing applications based on the following three criteria. The relative weighting of these three criteria shall be at the discretion of the Eligible Entity:

Speed to Deployment. The prospective subgrantee’s binding commitment to provision service by a date certain that is earlier than four years after the date on which the subgrantee will receive the subgrant from the Eligible Entity subject to contractual penalties to the OBD. Greater consideration can be awarded to prospective subgrantees promising an earlier service provision date.

Speed of Network and Other Technical Capabilities. OBD may weigh the speed, latency, and other technical capabilities of the technologies proposed by prospective subgrantees.

Preliminary/Provisional Subgrantees. For locations where OBD have already identified preliminary or provisionally selected subgrantees, OBD may give additional weight to those applications in the Benefit of the Bargain Round. As required by IJA, OBD must still ensure that subgrantees have a demonstrated record of, and plans to continue compliance with, Federal labor and employment laws. A subgrantee will satisfy this requirement through self-certification of compliance with Federal labor and employment laws. Fair labor practices shall no longer be considered within the scoring criteria. Likewise, the other secondary criteria identified in the NOFO (affordability, equitable workforce development and job quality, open access, local and tribal coordination), as well as any additional scoring criteria imposed by the OBD, shall no longer be considered as award selection criteria.

Selection Criteria: Applications will be reviewed by Office of Broadband Development staff. If an applicant meets all gating criteria, including demonstrating the financial, managerial, technical and operational capability to build and operate a broadband network and the cost does not exceed the EHCPLT, and is the only applicant for identified eligible locations, it will be considered for inclusion as a recommended subgrantee in Minnesota's Final Proposal submitted to NTIA for approval. The scoring factors and weight in the BEAD scoring rubric that applications with overlapping eligible locations will be judged by OBD staff based on the BEAD Volume 2 that has been approved by NTIA. OBD does not have the ability to modify what NTIA has directed to be included in the rubric. The NTIA approved scoring rubric is provided as Appendix B of Minnesota's approved BEAD Initial Proposal Volume 2 as noted above.

Questions:

Questions may be submitted by phone or email to deed.broadband@state.mn.us or 651-259-7610.

All answers will be posted within two five business days at <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/bead/> under BEAD FAQs.

Prequalification Submission:

All prequalification material must be submitted no later than 4:30 p.m. Central Time, on ~~February 27, 2025~~ July 21, 2025. The applicant will incur all costs incurred in submitting prequalification information.

Application Submission:

For entities that meet the prequalification requirements, OBD will accept BEAD grant applications in three subrounds as outlined in the NTIA approved Initial Proposal Volume 2. The three application subrounds are anticipated to have the timelines as outlined below, but all timelines are dependent on NTIA approval of the Final List of BEAD Eligible Locations, NTIA guidelines, funding availability.

~~Applications for BEAD funding will be considered over three subgrantee selection subrounds. For the first subround, subgrantees may propose their own project area and the focus will be on priority (fiber) broadband projects. For the second and third subgrantee selection subrounds, OBD will identify project areas which must be used in the application submission and all technologies will be considered. All applications must be submitted by 4:30 1:30 p.m. Central Time, on the date noted below for each subround. Applications must be submitted through the Grant Application Portal. Late applications will not be considered but can be resubmitted for consideration in a subsequent subround, should there be any rounds remaining. OBD is issuing one RFP for three planned subgrantee selection subrounds as provided for in the Initial Proposal Volume 2. Submission of and consideration per three subrounds is appropriate since one total dollar amount has been awarded to the state by NTIA, the state must ensure that all unserved locations are served before funding underserved locations, fiber projects are to be prioritized but all technologies considered, and NTIA will only review all selected subgrantees upon inclusion in one Final Proposal from the state. The applicant will incur all costs incurred in applying to this RFP with the exception that some costs may be eligible expenditures should an applicant be selected for an award and which results in a fully executed contract.~~

Applications must be submitted electronically to <https://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/broadband/bead/>

Review Process and Timeline

The OBD review team will evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline ~~for each subround. Each subround is inter-related and dependent on the other subrounds as the state must show that all unserved locations will be served and then all underserved locations.~~ Negotiations with anticipated selected subgrantees will be necessary to ensure that all eligible locations are included in a project recommended for funding in the Final Proposal while not exceeding the total funding allocated to the state. By law, NTIA will review all OBD recommendations as presented in the singular Final Proposal and NTIA is responsible for final approval of award decisions. All dates tentative and subject to change due to NTIA guidance.

RFP posted on DEED web site February 14, 2025

Questions on RFP due no later than 4:30 pm Central Time March 31, 2025

Subround 11a: *(Applications rescinded per NTIA BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice.)*

BEAD-eligible locations as approved by NTIA and subject to ongoing deduplication: February 14, 2025

Grant Round 11a opens for prequalified applicants..... March 10, 2025

Questions on subround 11a due:..... March 24, 2025,

FAQs and webinar: See webpage

BEAD subround 11a applications due no later than 4:30 pm Central Time April 7, 2025

OBD decides whether application likely to be included in Final Proposal..... TBA

Selected applicants undergo pre-award risk assessment..... TBA

Subround 11b and Subround 11c: *(Subrounds obsolete per NTIA BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice.)*

Establish project areas for application and window opens for subround 11b: TBA

Window opens for subround 11b: TBA

Questions on subround 11b due: TBA

FAQs and webinar: See webpage

BEAD subround 11b applications due no later than 4:30 pm Central Time:..... TBA

OBD decides whether application likely to be included in Final Proposal..... TBA

Selected applicants undergo pre-award risk assessment..... TBA

Subround 11c:

Publish remaining eligible locations and project areas and window opens
for subround 11c:..... TBA

Establish Extremely High Cost Per Location Threshold:..... TBA

Questions on subround 11c due:..... TBA

FAQs and webinar:..... see webpage

BEAD subround 11c applications due no later than 4:30pm Central Time: TBA

OBD decides whether application likely to be included in Final Proposal TBA

Selected applicants undergo pre-award risk assessment..... TBA

BEAD Restructured Round: *(New round as required per NITA BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice)*

Publish restructured eligible locations: June 30, 2025

Application portal opens for BEAD Restructured Round: July 14, 2025

Questions on subround BEAD Restructured Round due: July 21, 2025

FAQs and webinar: see webpage

BEAD Restructured Round applications due no later than 4:30 1:30pm Central Time:..... July 24, 2025

BEAD Restructured Round application deconfliction for inclusion in the Final Proposal begins..... July 25, 2025

Final Proposal:

Applicants submitted to Commissioner for Review..... August 20, 2025 ~~TBA~~

NTIA Required Public Comment Period on BEAD Final Proposal: August 28, 2025 ~~TBA~~

Submit Final Proposal to NTIA for approval: August 28, 2025 ~~TBA~~

Upon NTIA approval of Final Proposal, grant agreements with subgrantees included in the Final Proposal can be fully executed.

Prior Addendum

Addendum 3 – Updates to tentative dates listed for the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Request for Proposals (RFP)

Note: The RFP was amended for the third time on May 28, 2025.

Subround 11a:

OBD decides whether application likely to be included in Final Proposal: TBA (*previously May 27, 2025*)

Selected applicants undergo pre-award risk assessment: TBA (*previously May 27, 2025*)

Subround 11b:

Establish project areas for application and window opens for subround 11b: TBA (*previously May 20, 2025*)

Window opens for subround 11b: TBA (*previously May 27, 2025*)

Questions on subround 11b due: TBA (*previously June 6, 2025*)

FAQs and webinar: See webpage

BEAD subround 11b applications due no later than 4:30 pm Central Time: TBA (*previously June 16, 2025*)

OBD decides whether application likely to be included in Final Proposal: TBA (*previously July 7, 2025*)

Selected applicants undergo pre-award risk assessment: TBA (*previously July 7, 2025*)

Subround 11c:

Publish remaining eligible locations and project areas and window opens for subround 11c: TBA (*previously July 7, 2025*)

Establish Extremely High Cost Per Location Threshold: TBA (*previously June 24, 2025*)

Questions on subround 11c due: TBA (*previously July 18, 2025*)

FAQs and webinar: see webpage

BEAD subround 11c applications due no later than TBA (*previously July 24, 2025*)

OBD decides whether application likely to be included in Final Proposal: TBA (*previously August 20, 2025*)

Selected applicants undergo pre-award risk assessment: TBA (*previously August 20, 2025*)

Subround 11c:

Publish remaining eligible locations and project areas and window opens for subround 11c: TBA (*previously July 7, 2025*)

Establish Extremely High Cost Per Location Threshold: TBA (*previously June 24, 2025*)

Questions on subround 11c due: TBA (*previously July 18, 2025*)

FAQs and webinar: see webpage

BEAD subround 11c applications due no later than TBA (*previously July 24, 2025*)

OBD decides whether application likely to be included in Final Proposal: TBA (*previously August 20, 2025*)

Selected applicants undergo pre-award risk assessment: TBA (*previously August 20, 2025*)

Final Proposal:

Applicants submitted to Commissioner for Review: TBA (*previously August 20, 2025*)

NTIA Required Public Comment Period on BEAD Final Proposal: August 21, 2025 (*Previously September 3-17, 2025*)

Submit Final Proposal to NTIA for approval: September 4, 2025 (*Previously Oct 3, 2025*)

Addendum 2 – Updates to tentative dates listed for the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Request for Proposals (RFP)

Note: The RFP was amended for the second time on May 5, 2025. Initial posting of the RFP was February 14, 2025. First amendment was February 25, 2025. All dates continue to be tentative and subject to change due to NTIA guidance.

Subround 11a:

OBD decides whether application likely to be included in Final Proposal: May 27, 2025 (*previously April 21, 2025*)

Selected applicants undergo pre-award risk assessment: May 27, 2025 (*previously April 21, 2025*)

Subround 11b:

Establish project areas for application and window opens for subround 11b: May 20, 2025 (*previously April 23, 2025*)

Window opens for subround 11b: May 27, 2025 (*previously April 23, 2025*)

Questions on subround 11b due: June 6, 2025 (*previously May 7, 2025*)

FAQs and webinar: See webpage

BEAD subround 11b applications due no later than 4:30 pm Central Time: June 16, 2025 (*previously May 21, 2025*)

OBD decides whether application likely to be included in Final Proposal: July 7, 2025 (*previously June 17, 2025*)

Selected applicants undergo pre-award risk assessment: July 7, 2025 (*previously June 17, 2025*)

Subround 11c:

Publish remaining eligible locations and project areas and window opens for subround 11c: July 7, 2025 (*previously June 19, 2025*)

Establish Extremely High Cost Per Location Threshold: July 24, 2025 (*previously June 19, 2025*)

Questions on subround 11c due: July 18, 2025 (*previously June 26, 2025*)

FAQs and webinar: see webpage

BEAD subround 11c applications due no later than 4:30pm Central Time: July 24, 2025 (*previously July 10, 2025*)

Addendum 1 - Questions and Answers Regarding the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Request for Proposals (RFP)

Note: The RFP posted on February 14, 2025 and was amended on February 25, 2025.

The Pre-Qualification end date is being extended from Thursday, February 27, 2025 to Thursday, March 13, 2025.

The Subgrantee selection subround 11a is being changed from March 10, 2025-April 7, 2025 to March 24, 2025-April 21, 2025.

The OBD defined project areas posted is being changed from April 23, 2025-May 21, 2025 to May 7, 2025-May 21, 2025.

Questions:

FAQ Form link: FAQs should be submitted using this form

https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=RrAU68QkGUWPJricIVmCjA4DiC_nFNpHmvjyxuqkpX5UMERFNEhTOVhCSUxBM1RDQINDR0FaOUxQRC4u&route=shorturl. FAQs will be updated weekly to accommodate NTIA review of answers to all questions. Plan to submit all questions related to Pre-Qualification by Thursday March 6, 2025 to allow for a timely response.