



# FUNDING ALERT!



Professional assistance for today's unprecedented funding opportunities

Funding Amount: **\$628 million**

## APPLICATION

### Program Details

**Program Name:** Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD)

**Administrator:** Montana Broadband Office (MBO)

**Match Requirement:** 25% Match required

### Key Dates

- **August 15** – Application Window Opens
- **Prequalification Application & Main Round Application** will close no sooner than **October 15<sup>th</sup>**, or three weeks following NTIA's final approval of Challenge results

### Eligible Applicants

- Cooperatives
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Public-Private Partnerships
- Private Companies
- Public or Private Utilities
- Public Utility Districts
- Local Governments

### Eligible Projects

- Projects deploying qualifying last-mile broadband infrastructure to unserved (25/3 Mbps or less) and underserved (between 25/3 and 100/20 Mbps) locations

### Eligible Areas

- Applicants are allowed to define their proposed project areas consisting of existing Census Block Groups (CBGs).
- CBGs in a project area do not need to be contiguous.

## Eligible Costs

- Construction, improvement, and/or acquisition of facilities and telecommunications equipment, including infrastructure for backhaul, middle and last-mile networks, and MDUs
- Long-term leases of facilities to provide qualifying broadband service, including IRUs
- Deployment of internet and Wi-Fi within an eligible MDU
- Network software upgrades
- Engineering design, permitting, and work related to environmental, historical, and cultural reviews
- Personnel costs, including salaries and fringe benefits for staff and consultants
- Training for cybersecurity professionals working on BEAD-funded networks
- Workforce development including registered apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, community college and/or vocational training for broadband-related occupations

## Selection Criteria

### Scoring (maximum of 100 points):

#### Primary criteria

- **Minimal BEAD Outlay (up to 40 points):** Points awarded based on the percentage of requested funding above or below the benchmark for the project area.
- **Affordability (up to 10 points):**
  - **10 points** for symmetrical 1 Gbps service of less than \$70/month with no additional fees
  - **0 points** for symmetrical 1Gbps service of \$160/month or more
- **Fair Labor Practices (up to 15 points):** Applicants will provide details of their past compliance with federal fair labor laws, and to commit to following federal fair labor practices for the life of the BEAD assets
  - **10 points** for applicants who meet all requirements for past compliance
  - **5 points** for applicants with 1 past violation
  - **0 points** for applicants with more than 1 past violation

**5 additional points** to applicants who commit to following federal fair labor laws for the life of the BEAD assets

#### Secondary criteria

- **Speed Deployment (up to 4 points):** Points to be awarded based on the commit to complete deployment. Points will be calculated as follows
  - **4 points** for completing the build in less than 1 year
  - **3 points** for completing the build within 1 year
  - **2 points** for completing the build within 2 years
  - **1 point** for completing build within 3 years

- Opportunity Evaluation
- Effective Grant Writing
- A Track Record of Success

## Selection Criteria, (cont'd)

- **1 point** if the proposed number of locations for a particular project area exceeds the average number of locations across all project areas
- **0 points** if the proposed number of locations for a particular project area is less than the average number of locations across all project area
- **Unserved areas (up to 10 points):** Points awarded based on the percentage of unserved locations in their proposed project area **1 point** given for every 10% of unserved locations in the project area
  - **5 points** if a project area contains 50% unserved locations
  - **8 points** if a project area contains 80% unserved locations, etc.
- **Number of Locations Served (up to 1 point):** Points will be awarded to applicants based on the total number of locations (BSLs and CAIs) in their proposed project area.

### **\*\*Non-Priority Broadband Projects Only\*\* Scoring (maximum of 100 points)**

- **Primary Criteria**
  - **Up to 40 points** for Minimal BEAD Outlay
  - **Up to 20 points** for Affordability
  - **Up to 15 points** for Fair labor practices
- **Secondary Criteria**
  - **1 point** for speed to deployment
  - **1 point** for speed of network and other capabilities
  - **Up to 14 points** for Unserved areas
  - **Up to 3 points** for existing infrastructure
  - **Up to 4 points** for length of service in Montana
  - **1 point** for High-cost areas
  - **1 point** for number of locations served

## Application Process

- Submitting a Prequalification Application is strongly recommended

## Links & Contacts

- [Main Round Application Guide](#)
- [BEAD Prequalification Application](#)
- [MT Broadband Map](#)
- [MBO BEAD Home Page](#)
- Submit questions on BEAD Main Round to: [Contact \(mt.gov\)](#) or email: [connectmt@mt.gov](mailto:connectmt@mt.gov)

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