Montana Broadband Communications Advisory Commission Meeting

March 6, 2024

Topics of Discussion for March 2024 Commission Meeting

- BEAD and Digital Opportunity Plan Updates

- Prequalification
  - Overview
  - Timeline
  - Application Components
  - Application Intake Demonstration

- Main Round
  - Timeline and Review Approach
  - Application Components
  - Scoring Overview

- Stakeholder Engagement and Technical Assistance Timeline

BEAD and Digital Opportunity Plan Updates

Approved
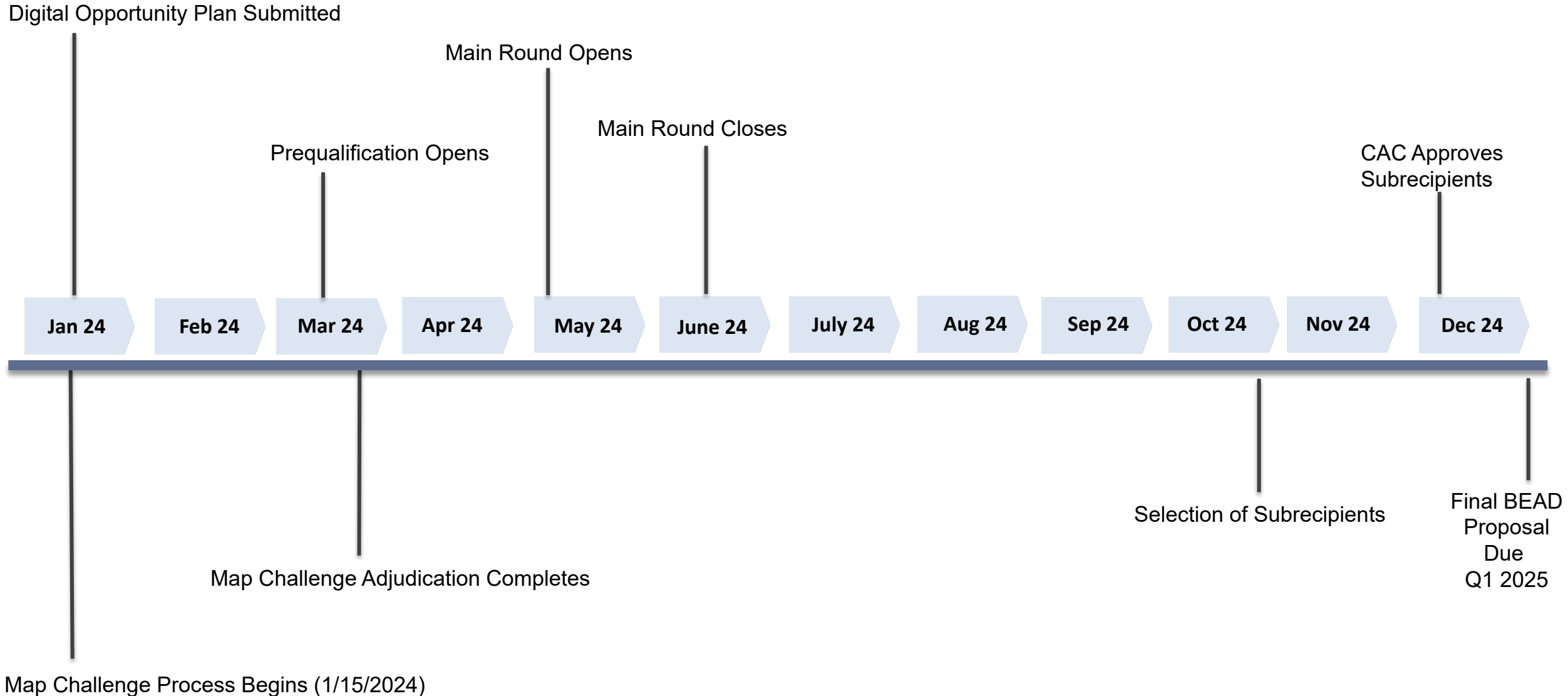
Initial Proposal Volume 1

Updates

Digital Opportunity Plan

Initial Proposal Volume 2

What to Expect Next

- IPV2 curing and resubmission (Feb 2024)
- IPV2 approval by NTIA (TBD)
- Final Proposal drafting (Fall 2024)
- Final Proposal CAC approval (Dec 2024)
- Final Proposal submission to NTIA (Jan 2025)

Estimated 2024 Month by Month IIJA Program Timeline

Digital Opportunity Plan Submitted

Main Round Opens

Main Round Closes

Prequalification Opens

CAC Approves
Subrecipients

| Jan 24 | Feb 24 | Mar 24 | Apr 24 | May 24 | June 24 | July 24 | Aug 24 | Sep 24 | Oct 24 | Nov 24 | Dec 24 |

Selection of Subrecipients

Final BEAD
Proposal
Due
Q1 2025

Map Challenge Adjudication Completes

Map Challenge Process Begins (1/15/2024)

*Full allocation received upon approval of IPV2
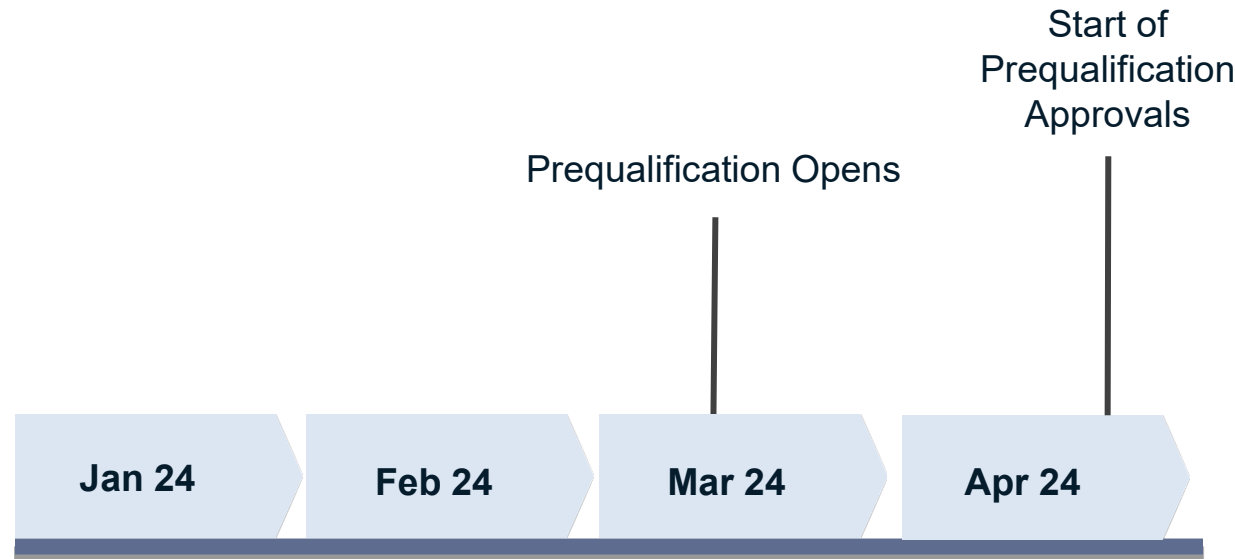
Prequalification Overview

- **Purpose**
  - The purpose of the prequalification process is to evaluate the eligibility status of each intended applicant to ensure these entities have a smooth main round application process.
  - Enables applicants to have a smooth main round application process

- **Timing**
  - The prequalification application will be available in early March
  - Providers who intend to apply during the main application round must have an approved prequalification application prior to receiving access to the Main Round application.

Start of
Prequalification
Approvals

Prequalification Opens

| Jan 24 | Feb 24 | Mar 24 | Apr 24 |

Prequalification Components

Component	Requirement	Review Standard
Financial	• Financial Statements • Executive Authority for Financial Capability • Letter of Credit	Review for indicators of financial stability, appropriateness of plan for letter of credit and completed certification.
Organizational	• Resumes of Key Management Personnel • Roles and Responsibilities • Organizational Chart • Prior Broadband Experience • Current Broadband Deployment Projects	Review for qualifications of key personnel, completeness of organizational chart, evidence of ability to execute projects of similar size and scope.
Certifications and Compliance	• Staff Certifications and Compliance • Environmental, Historical, and BABA Requirements • Legal Opinion • Health and Safety • Prior Service and FCC Form 477 • Business Registration	Adherence to all required certifications and compliance requirements.

Prequalification Components

Component	Requirement	Review Standard
Federal Labor and Employment Law	• Federal Law Compliance • Labor and Employment Practices	Ensure applicants comply with all requirements or provide a narrative account with mitigating steps
Risk Management	• Cybersecurity • Supply Chain	Ensure proper risk management plans are in place and that applicant commits to period reevaluation and update of plans
Ownership	• Disclosure of relevant ownership information	Ensure compliance with application guidelines

Prequalification Application Intake Demonstration

- **Application Registration**
  - By clicking the 'Apply' button, applicants will be prompted to Log In or Register.
  - When the BEAD Application Portal (powered by Amplifund) Login screen appears, users will click the 'Register' button to Create New Account for their Applicant Organization. Applicants should only Register ONCE for their Organization. Users can be added to the Organization account

- **Navigating the Applicant Portal**
  - Once registered and in the applicant portal, users can edit their information or add Users through the Account Information section.
  - User roles: Editor vs Administrator
  - Editor can modify application but cannot submit

- **Live Demonstration**

Main Round Timeline and Review Approach

Main Round Opens

Main Round Closes

CAC Approves
Subrecipients

| May 24 | June 24 | July 24 | Aug 24 | Sep 24 | Oct 24 | Nov 24 | Dec 24 |

Selection of Subrecipients

Final BEAD
Proposal
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Q1 2025

Review Approach

The application review will follow the guidance set forth by IPV2 and the Notice of Funding Opportunity
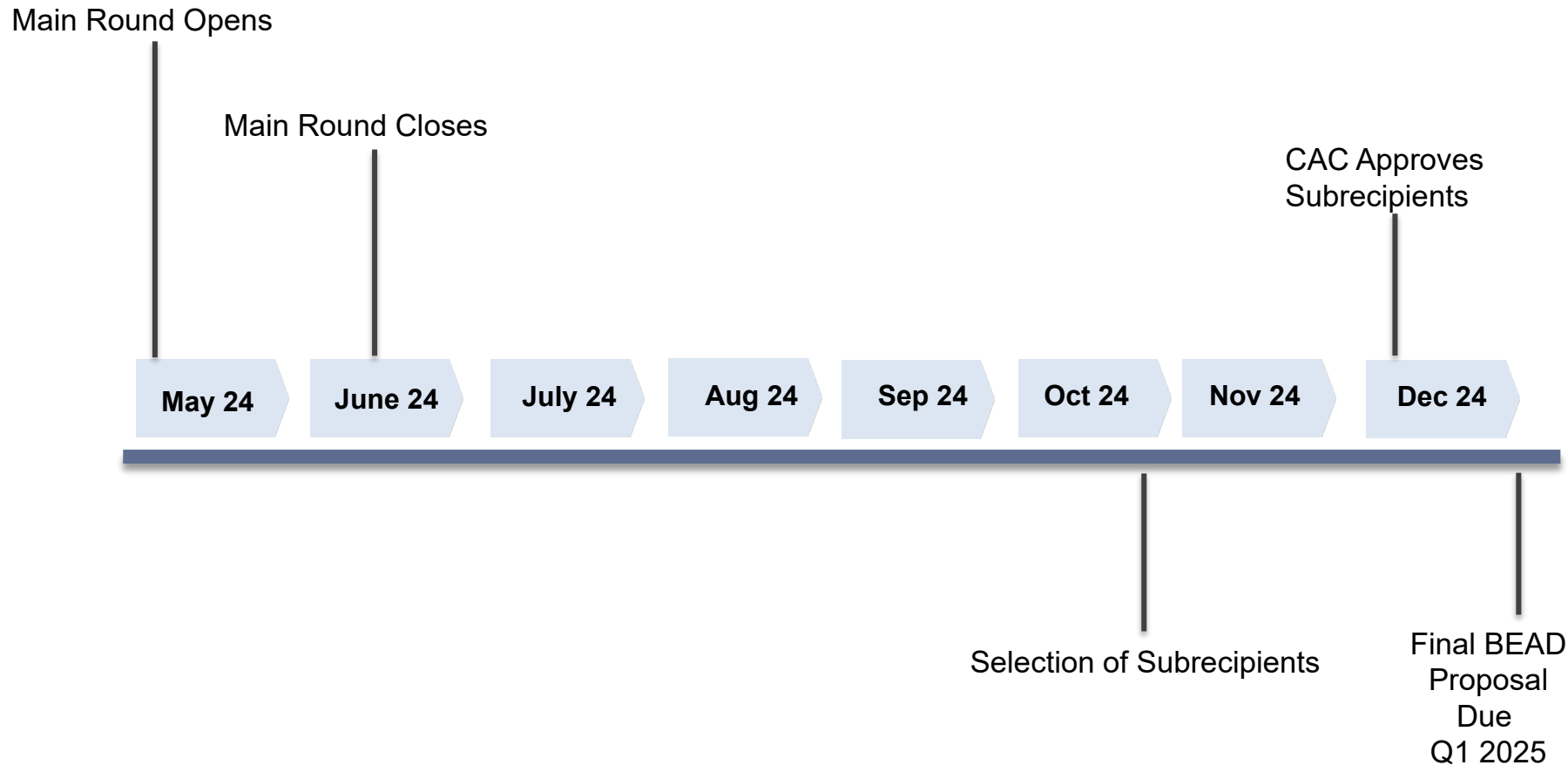
Main Round Base Application Components

Applicants will provide the following base information for all projects:

- List of Census Block Groups (CBGs) and Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSL) for each proposed project

- Total Funding Request

- Total Proposed Match

- Total Proposed Project Value

- Brief Project Description

- Total Route Miles and CAIs

- Identification of Requirement for Tribal Resolution

Anticipated Templates and Application Tools

- Templated .csv file for CBG and BSL submission
- Sample project description language

Main Round Financial Requirements

Component	Requirement	Review Standard
Updated Financial Information	• Opportunity to update any previously submitted financial information • Interim Financial Statements for current fiscal year • Financial Changes • Available funds • Letter of Credit Option	Review for indicators of financial stability, and commitment by financial institution for LOC or selected waiver option.
Additional Project Specific Financial	• Long-Term Business Plan • Pro Forma (including CapEx and detailed assumptions narrative)	Review for completeness, feasibility and reasonability of proposed project plan.
Certification	• Operational Capacity Certification	Adherence to all required certifications and compliance requirements.

Main Round Organizational Requirements

Component	Requirement	Review Standard
Organizational Information	• Opportunity to update any previously submitted organizational information	Review based on requirements outlined during previous application phase.
Existing Project Information	• Existing or planned applications for publicly funded projects • Completed template with key project data	Review for completeness and validate to ensure there are no duplicate funding requests.
Certification	• Operational Capacity Certification	Adherence to all required certifications and compliance requirements.

Main Round Project Staffing and Labor Requirements

Component	Requirement	Review Standard
Project Staffing	• Key Project Personnel Resumes • Staffing and Recruitment Plans • Training and Credentialing Plans • Workforce Demographics (Unionized?, Size)	Review for alignment with proposed project needs.
Subcontracting	• Subcontracting Plan (if applicable) • Subcontracting Selection Process • Subcontracting Credentialling Requirements	Review for alignment with proposed project needs.
Compliance	• Certification of compliance with federal labor laws	Adherence to all required certifications and compliance requirements.

Main Round Project Plan and Professional Engineer Certifications

Component	Requirement	Review Standard
Project Plan	• Project Plan Narrative • Shapefile -- Existing Infrastructure • Network Diagram • Project Costs • Project Timeline	Review for completeness, feasibility and reasonability of proposed project plan and other associated components.
Professional Engineer Certifications	• Technical certifications • Fiber-optic scalability • BSL speed capability • Funded Network connection speed capability • Network Topology and Capacity Certification • Project Costs and Capital Investment Schedule Certification	Required certifications must be completed by a licensed professional engineer.

Main Round Certification, Compliance and Ownership

Component	Requirement	Review Standard
Certifications	• EHP, BABA, Broadband Data Act, Cyber Security, Supply Chain	Adherence to all required certifications and compliance requirements.
Compliance	• Health and Safety • Other applicable state and federal laws	Adherence to all required certifications and compliance requirements.
Ownership	• Ownership information	Adherence to all required certifications and compliance requirements.

Main Round Scoring Criteria Submission Requirements

Applicants will indicate anticipated score in each category

Component	Criteria Used to Judge Component
BEAD Outlay	Proposed project cost
Affordability	Business plans and historic rate evidence
Fair Labor Practices	Third party database check and narrative supporting reported number of fair labor violations
Prevailing Wages	Supporting narrative detailing wage plans, if claimed will be included in contract compliance requirements
Speed to Deployment	Project timeline
Ratio of Unserved Areas	Proposed CBGs
Existing Infrastructure	Network diagram and associated shapefile
Length of Service in Montana	Business registration and submitted evidence
High-Cost Areas	CBG file
Number of Locations Served	CBG file

Anticipated Templates and Application Tools

- Sample scoring spreadsheet (applicants will be asked to submit completed scoring spreadsheet)

Main Round Application Review Process

- Initial Completeness Check

- Initial Scoring Validation

- Analysis of CBG coverage and identification of one, two, and no bid scenarios

- Issue notice of received applications

- Full application review based on scoring

- Negotiation for deduplication and no bid scenarios

- Recommendation for funding

Components of Stakeholder Engagement and Technical Assistance

Proposed Technical Assistance			
Component	**Topic**	**Anticipated Date**	**Mode**
Prequalification	Q&A Session	03/08/2024*	Webinar
Prequalification	Q&A Session	03/15/2024*	Webinar
Main Round	Overview	04/03/2024*	Webinar
Main Round	Bidder's Conference	04/17/24 - 04/18/24*	In-Person
Main Round	Application System Demo	05/02/2024*	Webinar
Main Round	Financial	05/07/2024*	Webinar
Main Round	Technical	05/09/2024*	Webinar
Main Round	Environmental	05/14/2024*	Webinar
Main Round	Program Requirements	05/16/2024*	Webinar
Main Round	Q&A	05/24/2024*	Webinar

Note: Additional sessions focused on tribal engagement are being planned.

All dates are estimated and subject to change

The Stakeholder Engagement and Technical Assistance framework comprises three integral phases: the Challenge Process, Prequalification, and Main Round.

Each phase builds upon the preceding one, equipping the applicant with the necessary information to successfully navigate through all three processes.

*All dates listed are tentative, official dates will be posted on ConnectMT website once confirmed