



Montana Broadband Communications Advisory Commission Meeting

July 29, 2025

Discussion Topics

July 2025 Commission Meeting:

- BEAD Program Update
- Final Proposal
- Public Comment



Benefit of Bargain Round Overview

Purpose

- The purpose of the Benefit of the Bargain Round (BBR) was to conduct an additional subgrantee selection round for every BEAD-eligible location, regardless of technology, and for applicants to compete on a level playing field based on the updated NTIA NOFO. Overall eligibility remained the same.

New Applicants

- Applicants who did not previously apply to the Main Round application could apply to the BBR, so long as they submitted a prequalification application.
- New applicants must have satisfied all eligibility requirements.

Current Applicants

- Applicants who already applied to the Main Round application could opt to either :
 - a) Update their existing application
 - b) Submit a new application for the Benefit of the Bargain via new AmpliFund portal





Definition of “Priority” Restored to Statute

- Public Notice restored ‘Priority’ Broadband Project’ to IUA definition:
 - The term “Priority Broadband Project” 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 advance services.



Factors Used To Evaluate Priority Status

These elements are required to be considered priority*

Detailed Description of Applicable Network Components

- Logical Network Diagram
- Access layer
- Headend & internet backbone connectivity
- Reliability & quality of service
- Customer premises equipment
- Tower locations
- Uplink/Downlink throughput
- Gateway infrastructure & satellite uplinks

Capacity Performance Calculations

- A minimum of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload
- ≤ 100 ms roundtrip latency
- Simultaneous 5 Mbps to all connected locations, including BEAD and non-BEAD users

Scalability Performance Calculations

- Ability to meet performance targets five years after initial deployment, assuming a 25% annual increase in capacity demand

Support for 5G and Advanced Services Calculations

- Ability to deliver at least 300 Mbps download and 30 Mbps upload capacity to each of three distinct locations within the proposed project area (*totaling 900/90 Mbps aggregate capacity*)
- Maintain roundtrip latency no greater than 100 ms on each of these links

**To include but not limited to the following details*



Primary & Secondary Scoring Rubric

Policy Notice revised scoring criteria to focus on cost minimization:

- **Primary Criteria**
 - Minimal BEAD Program Outlay: Project proposal reflects the lowest overall cost to the Program based on total BEAD funding required to complete the project calculated as 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**
 - Speed of Network and Other Technical Capabilities: Ability for network design to demonstrate technical performance (speed and latency) and future scalability.
 - Preliminary/Provisional Subgrantees: Project was previously preliminarily selected.

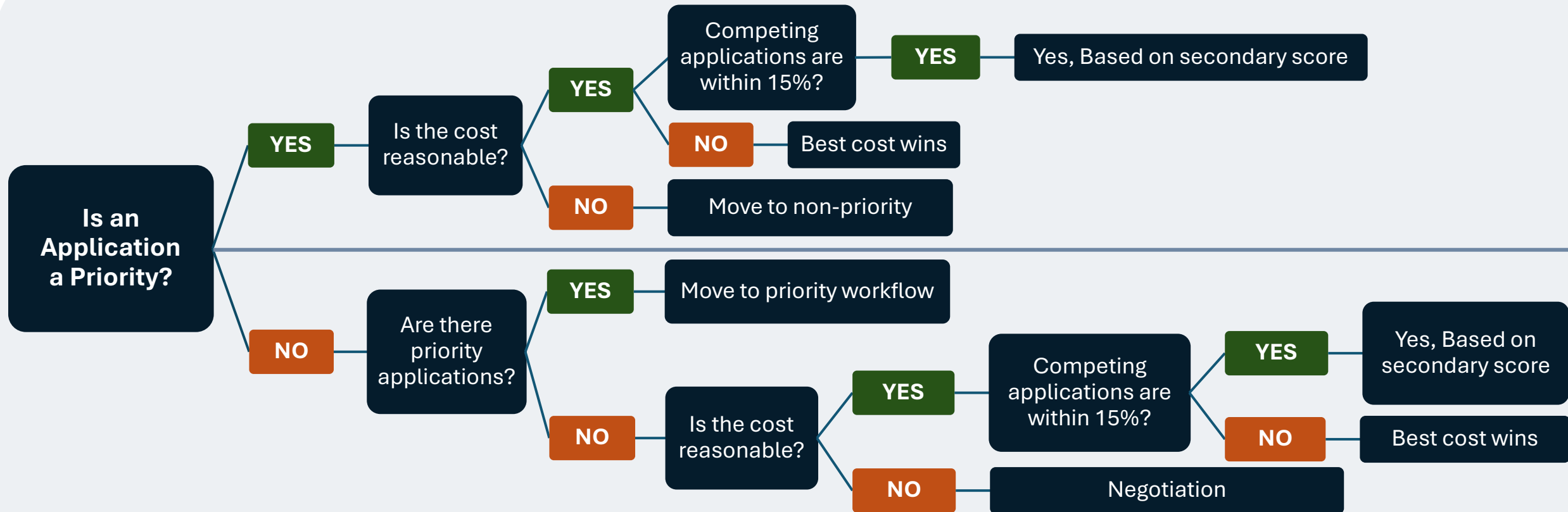


CAC Approved Scoring Rubric

Primary Criteria	VALUE	NOTES		
BEAD Outlay	N/A	Average cost per BSL calculated on award request divided by number of proposed locations and considering overall cost to the program.		
Secondary Criteria: If multiple applications are within 15% of the lowest cost per location bid, the following score is calculated				
Speed of Network and Other Technical Capabilities	50	Download	Upload	Points
		≥ 2 Gbps	≥ 2 Gbps	50
		≥ 1 Gbps and < 2 Gbps	≥ 1 Gbps and < 2 Gbps	40
		≥ 500 Mbps and < 1 Gbps	≥ 500 Mbps and < 1 Gbps	30
		≥ 100 Mbps and < 500 Mbps	≥ 100 Mbps and < 500 Mbps	20
		≥ 100 Mbps	< 100 Mbps	10
Preliminary/Provisional Subgrantees	50	50 points for applicants who previously participated by submitting a Main Round application		



Benefit of the Bargain – Application Logic





Applications Received

Benefit of the Bargain Round closed Friday, July 25, 2025:

- **47 Benefit of the Bargain Round Applications**
 - 9 applications from new entities, 38 applications from previous applicants
- **All technology types represented**
 - MBO received applications proposing Fiber, LFW, ULFW, HFC, LEO and hybrid solutions
 - Every application requested to be considered priority
- **All Eligible BSLs covered**
 - MBO received an application for every eligible BSL in the state, many applications also proposed to serve CAIs
- **Total Funding**
 - MBO received applications totaling to almost \$557 M



What to Expect in August

Application Review

- Ongoing review from July 25, 2025 to approximately August 13, 2025

Application Data Review and Finalization

- Completed by August 20, 2025*

Preliminary Selection Results

- Target date to post as part of Final Proposal on August 21, 2025*

Final Proposal Public Comment Period

- Post on [ConnectMT website](#) by August 21, 2025* and close by August 28, 2025*

CAC Review and Approval of Final Proposal

- Presented on August 26, 2025 CAC Meeting

Submit Final Proposal to NTIA

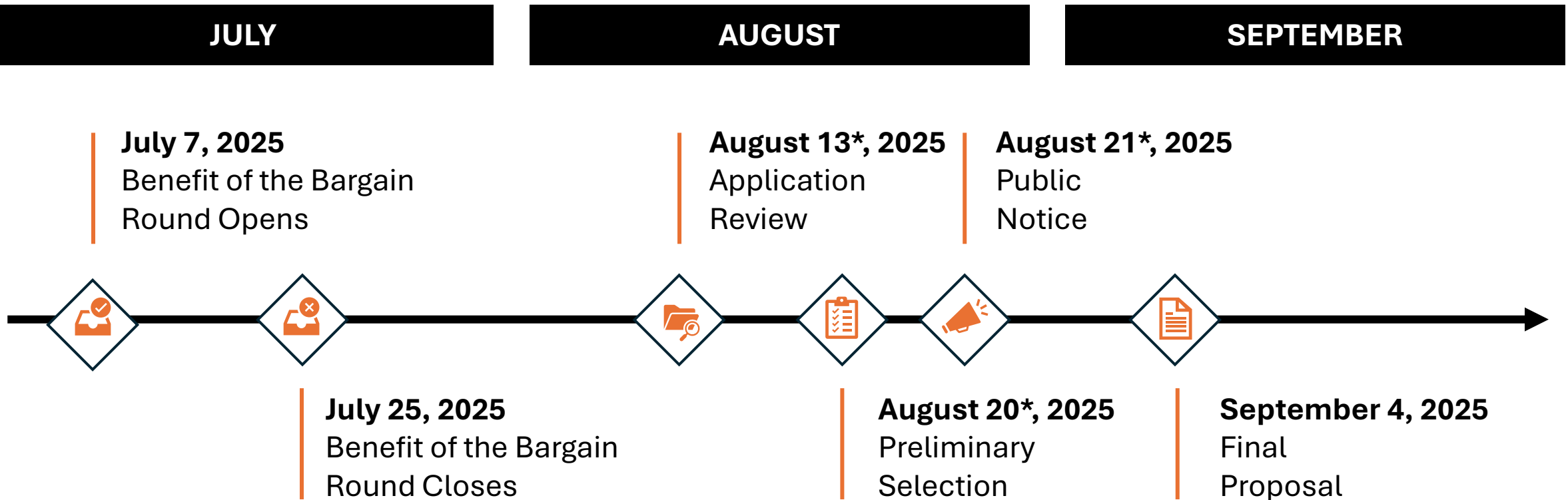
- Target date to submit is September 3, 2025*
- Due no later than September 4, 2025

* Add dates are estimated and subject to change



Benefit of the Bargain Timeline

Anticipated Remaining Program Timeline



* Add dates are estimated and subject to change





Public Comment