

Montana BEAD Technical Assistance Main Round Scoring Webinar

August 27, 2024

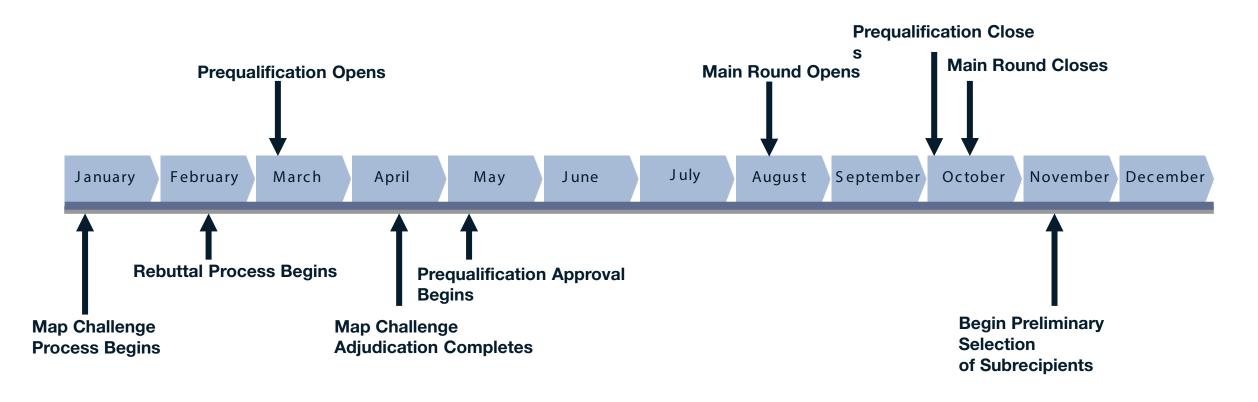
BEAD PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program is designed to expand high-speed internet access by funding planning, infrastructure deployment, and adoption programs across the country.
- The state of Montana (MT) was awarded close to \$629 million in BEAD funding to connect all unserved and underserved locations in the state with reliable and affordable broadband. The ConnectMT Broadband Office will execute the subgrantee selection process across three phases:
 - Map Challenge Process: Nonprofits, ISPs, and local governments can submit challenges to the broadband map.
 - Prequalification: Applicants will submit materials for prequalification to meet the BEAD minimum eligibility requirements.
 - o Main Round Application: Once prequalification is completed, applicants will be invited to submit proposals for projects as part per the training the main south of the training the training the training training the training training the training traini

BEAD Program Dates:

- BEAD Main Round Opened Tuesday, August 13th.
- BEAD Prequalification
 Application closes Tuesday,
 October 1st.
- BEAD Main Round Application closes Tuesday, October 15th.

2024 BEAD PROGRAM TIMELINE





MAIN ROUND OVERVIEW

- The purpose of the Main Round Application is to allow prequalified applicants to submit detailed project proposals for consideration under the BEAD program.
- Subgrantee Eligibility Requirements: To receive BEAD funding, subgrantees must:
 - Meet mandated financial requirements;
 - Demonstrate capability to provide broadband service in MT;
 - Propose a project that will provide 100/20 service to all locations within service area within timeline; and
 - Certify ability to comply with all requirements mandated by NTIA and the State of Montana.



MAIN ROUND REQUIREMENTS

- Eligible Applicants:
 - Eligible applicants for a BEAD subgrant include cooperatives, nonprofit organizations, public-private partnerships, private companies, public or private utilities, public utility districts, or local governments.
- Eligible Program Areas:
 - The ConnectMT Broadband Office has opted to allow applicants to define their proposed broadband project areas consisting of existing Census Block Groups (CBGs).
- Eligible Program Costs:
 - The BEAD NOFO (Notice of Funding Opportunity) defines eligible uses of funding in connection with last-mile broadband deployment projects.

Please Note:

 Applicants must propose to provide service to all unserved (less than 25 Mbps) and underserved (between 25/3 Mbps and 100/20 Mbps) Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs) in any CBGs they offer.



PRIORITY VS NONPRIORITY

- To approach the process holistically, maximize competition, and give the State the most complete view of its service options, priority and non-priority applications will be accepted in tandem in the main round.
- Priority Application Project: Applications that will provide service via end-to-end fiber-optic facilities to each end-user premises; these applications will be evaluated first for every project area.
- Non-Priority Application Project: Applications that propose a technology solution that does not include a fully fiber solution, which could include HFC, DSL, licensed fixed wireless, or a mix of these technologies.





MAIN ROUND SCORING

SCORING CRITERIA OVERVIEW

- Priority projects
 - Primary criteria
 - Secondary criteria
- Non-Priority projects
 - Primary criteria
 - Secondary criteria

Resource: Scoring (IPv2 page 39)

PRIORITY PROJECT SCORING RUBRIC

Primary criteria (must be ≥ 75%)	Maximum Points Possible
Minimal BEAD program outlay: Per project BEAD grant request	40
Affordability: Lowest price for 1/1 Gbps service commitment	20
Fair labor practices: Past compliance with fair labor practices and future commitment to prevailing wages	15
Secondary criteria	
Speed to deployment (<4 years)	1
Additional prioritization factors	
Whether the proposed project area serves unserved or underserved areas, with unserved areas receiving greater	14
weight Use of existing broadband infrastructure in relation to proposed network design	4
The length of time the provider has been providing broadband service in the state	4
High-cost areas must be considered for services to the extent terrestrial service is economically viable	1
The number of households, businesses, farms, ranches, and community anchor institutions served	1
Total score	100

^{1.} The term "Priority Broadband Project" means a project that will provision service via end-to-end fiber-optic facilities to each end user premises. BEAD NOFO, p. 14.; Source: BEAD Initial Proposal Guidance

- Minimal BEAD program outlay per project (40 points maximum)
 - Subgrantee applicants will provide the list of census block groups (CBGs) and the grant request amount for each project area they are applying for. If a subgrantee applicant chooses to submit multiple applications, each for a different project area composed of one or more CBGs, then for each application, the provider should note the CBGs that comprise the project area and the grant request for each project area. Each application will be scored and evaluated separately.
 - The MBO will calculate the reference funding benchmark for each project area by summing up the benchmarks for each CBG included in an individual project area. The benchmark for each CBG will be based on the CostQuest Associates cost model provided by NTIA as a starting point. The reference benchmark for each CBG will be posted publicly as part of the application materials.



- Minimal BEAD program outlay per project (cont'd)
 - Points will be awarded to applications based on the percentage their requested grant funding amount is below or above the benchmark for a given project area. Specifically, points will be calculated as follows: 40 – (20 * (grant request amount / benchmark)), with a minimum of 0 points possible and a maximum of 40 points possible.
 - For example, assume the benchmark for a particular project area is \$100. If the grant request amount is \$150, then the application would receive 10 points: 40 (20 * (150/100)) = 10. If the grant request amount is \$50, then the application would receive 30 points: 40 (20 * (50/100) = 30.
 - Note that per NTIA guidance, absent a waiver such as in high-cost areas, the subgrantee's proposed match must cover no less than 25 percent of the project cost.



Minimal BEAD program outlay per project (cont'd)

County Name	Census Block Group Identfication Number	Number of proposed CAIs	BEAD Funds Request
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$
			\$



- Affordability (20 points maximum) Lowest price for 1/1 Gbps service commitment
 - Subgrantee applicants who commit to offering 1/1 Gbps service to the customers in BEAD project areas at the same rates they offer in their existing markets will earn 20 points.
 - If applicants do not currently offer 1/1 Gbps service, they may make forward-looking commitments to offer the same rates for 1/1 Gbps plans across all locations to earn 20 points.
 - Subgrantee applicants who do not make one of these commitments will earn 0 points.
 - Applicants who fail to deliver on their pricing commitments will be subject to claw back provisions.

- Fair labor practices (15 points maximum)
 - Subgrantee applicants will provide details of their past compliance with federal fair labor laws, according to the requirements outlined in Section 2.7.1 of the IPv2. Subgrantee applicants will have the opportunity to earn points for making forward-looking commitments to offering Montana prevailing wages to their BEAD project workforce.
 - Points will be awarded to applications based on both past record of compliance and commitment to offer prevailing wages. Applicants who meet all requirements for past compliance with federal fair labor laws will receive 13 points, while applicants with 1 past violation will receive 6 points, and applicants with more than 1 past violation will receive 0 points.

- Fair labor practices (cont'd)
 - Applicants who commit to offering prevailing wages (per Davis-Bacon) to their BEAD project workforce will receive an additional 2 points.
 - Additionally, applicants who do not have a record of compliance with federal labor and compliance laws (e.g., a new market entrant) may achieve the full 13 points by making forward-looking commitments to abide by all state and federal fair labor laws, and an additional 2 points by committing to offer prevailing wages (per Davis-Bacon) to their BEAD project workforce.
 - Applicants who fail to deliver on their forward-looking federal fair labor law commitments will be subject to claw back provisions.

- Speed to deployment (1 point maximum)
 - Subgrantee applicants will provide the timeframe (in months) in which they are making a binding commitment to complete deployment of their BEAD-funded broadband project. Completion of a BEAD-funded broadband project means that for all locations within a given project area, construction is completed, and a customer could receive service within 10 days upon request.
 - If an applicant commits to completing all of their BEAD-funded deployment in less than 48 months, that applicant would receive 1 point. If an applicant does not commit to completing all of their BEAD-funded deployment in less 48 months, that applicant would receive 0 points.
 - Applicants who fail to deliver on their deployment commitments will be subject to claw back provisions.

- Unserved areas (14 points maximum)
 - When the MBO releases application materials for the subgrantee process, the list of un- and underserved locations within each CBG will also be published. Subgrantee applicants will create project areas comprised of one or more CBGs. Since subgrantees must bid on all un- and underserved locations in a CBG, the MBO will have the list of un- and underserved locations that each subgrantee applicant is committing to provide with broadband service.
 - The MBO believes that encouraging bids in CBGs with a high percentage of unserved locations will encourage coverage of all un- and underserved locations as many underserved locations will be more conveniently served through deployment to unserved locations.

- Unserved areas (cont'd)
 - Points will be awarded to applications based on the percentage of unserved locations in the proposed project area out of the total broadband serviceable locations in the proposed project area. Specifically, points will be calculated as follows: 1 point will be awarded for every 2% of unserved locations in the project area, up to the maximum threshold of 28% or more. Any project area that has over 28% of unserved locations will receive the maximum 14 points.
 - For example, if a project area contains 21% unserved locations, then the application would receive 10 points. If the project area contains 40% unserved locations, then the application would receive 14 points.

- Existing infrastructure (4 points maximum)
 - To receive points for existing infrastructure, subgrantee applicants will provide materials that show their existing infrastructure in relation to their proposed network design for BEAD funded infrastructure.
 - Points will be awarded based on the proposed network design's proximity to the existing service area. Specifically, points will be calculated based on the existing infrastructure's distance from the proposed network design as indicated below.

Existing infrastructure (cont'd)

Proximity to proposed network design	Points
≤ 1 mile	4
> 1 and ≤ 5 miles	3
> 5 and ≤ 10 miles	2
> 10 and ≤ 15 miles	1
> 15 miles	0



- Length of service in Montana (4 points maximum)
 - Subgrantee applicants will provide the length of time they have been providing broadband service in the state, not including legacy companies.
 - Points will be awarded based on the length of time applicants have been providing broadband service in Montana. Specifically, points will be calculated as follows: 1 point will be awarded for every 10 years that a subgrantee applicant has been providing broadband service in Montana, up to the maximum of 4 points total.
 - For example, if a subgrantee applicant has been providing service in Montana for 19 years, that application would receive 1 point. If a subgrantee applicant has been providing service in Montana for 35 years, that application would receive 3 points.

Note: applicants will be required to provide documentation to justify their claim of length of service in the state.

EPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

- High-cost area (1 point maximum)
 - When the MBO releases application materials for the subgrantee process, it will include the CBGs eligible for funding with the corresponding set of un- and underserved locations. Furthermore, the MBO will also designate which CBGs are classified as highcost CBGs based on the definition of high-cost areas as determined by NTIA as part of the BEAD allocation process.
 - 1 point will be awarded to an application if their project area proposal includes at least 1 high-cost CBG.

- Number of locations served (1 point maximum)
 - Applicants will bid on project areas that represent one or more CBGs consisting of a defined set of un- and underserved Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs). In addition to the BSLs, the MBO will also publish the list of eligible Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs) within each CBG. Subgrantee applicants will specify in their applications how many CAIs they propose to deploy broadband service to.
 - Points will be awarded to applications based on the total number of locations (eligible BSLs and eligible CAIs) in the proposed project area compared to the average number of locations proposed across all projects.

- Number of locations served (cont'd)
 - Specifically, points will be calculated as follows: 1 point will be awarded if an applicant's proposed number of locations (eligible BSLs and eligible CAIs) for a particular project area is greater than the average number of locations (eligible BSLs and eligible CAIs) across all project areas. No points will be awarded if the proposed number of locations (eligible BSLs and eligible CAIs) for a particular project area is less than the average number of locations (eligible BSLs and eligible CAIs) across all project areas.
 - For example, if the average number of locations (eligible BSLs and eligible CAIs) across all project areas is 5,000 and the number of locations (eligible BSLs and eligible CAIs) proposed for a particular project area is 6,000, the application would receive 1 point. If the number of locations (eligible BSLs and eligible CAIs) proposed for a particular project area is 4,000, the application would receive 0 points.

NON-PRIORITY PROJECT SCORING RUBRIC

Primary criteria (must be ≥ 75%)	Maximum Points Possible
Minimal BEAD program outlay: Per project BEAD grant request	40
Affordability: Lowest price for 100/20 Mbps service commitment	20
Fair labor practices: Past compliance and future commitment to prevailing wages	15
Secondary criteria	
Speed to deployment (<4 years)	1
Speed of network and other technical capabilities	1
Additional prioritization factors	
Whether the proposed project area serves unserved or underserved areas, with unserved areas receiving greater weight	14
Use of existing broadband infrastructure in relation to proposed network design	3
The length of time the provider has been providing broadband service in the state	4
High-cost areas must be considered for services to the extent terrestrial service is economically viable	1
The number of households, businesses, farms, ranches, and community anchor institutions served	1
Total score	100

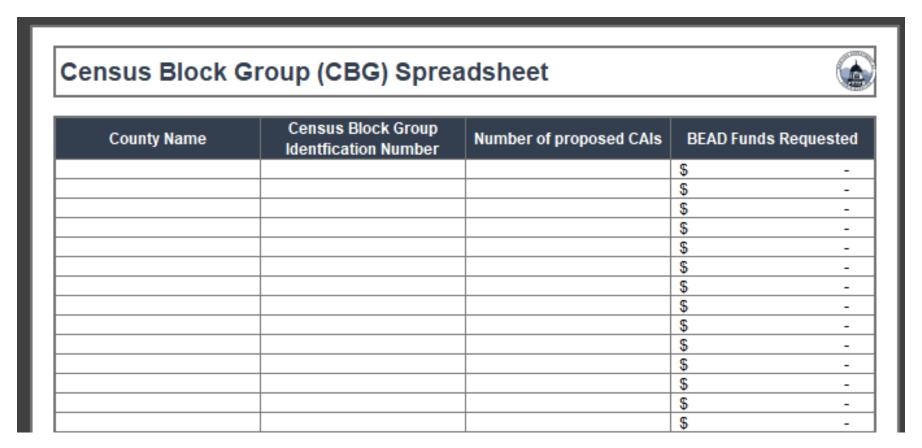
- Minimal BEAD program outlay per project (40 points maximum)
 - Subgrantee applicants will provide the list of CBGs and the grant request amount for each project area they are applying for. If a subgrantee chooses to submit multiple applications, each for a different project area composed of one or more CBGs, then for each application, the provider should note the CBGs that comprise the project area and the grant request for each project area. Each application will be scored and evaluated separately.
 - The MBO will calculate the reference funding benchmark for each project area by summing up the benchmarks for each CBG included in an individual project area. The benchmark for each CBG will be based on the CostQuest Associates cost model provided by NTIA as a starting point. As noted above, the reference benchmark for each CBG will be posted publicly as part of the application materials.



- Minimal BEAD program outlay per project (cont'd)
 - Points will be awarded to applications based on the percentage their requested grant funding amount is below or above the benchmark for a given project area. Specifically, points will be calculated as follows: 40 – (20 * (grant request amount / benchmark)), with a minimum of 0 points possible and a maximum of 40 points possible.
 - For example, assume the benchmark for a particular project area is \$100. If the grant request amount is \$150, then the application would receive 10 points: 40 (20 * (150/100)) = 10. If the grant request amount is \$50, then the application would receive 30 points: 40 (20 * (50/100) = 30.
 - Note that per NTIA guidance, absent a waiver such as in high-cost areas, the subgrantee's proposed match must cover no less than 25 percent of the project cost.



Minimal BEAD program outlay per project (cont'd)





- Affordability (20 points maximum) Lowest price for 100/20 Mbps service commitment
 - Subgrantee applicants who commit to offering 100/20 Mbps service to the customers in BEAD project areas at the same rates they offer in their existing markets will earn 20 points.
 - If applicants do not currently offer 100/20 Mbps service, they may make forward-looking commitments to offer the same rates for 100/20 Mbps plans across all locations to earn 20 points.
 - Subgrantee applicants who do not make one of these commitments will earn 0 points.
 - Applicants who fail to deliver on their pricing commitments will be subject to clawback provisions.

- Fair labor practices (15 points maximum)
 - Subgrantee applicants will provide details of their past compliance with federal fair labor laws, according to the requirements outlined in Section 2.7.1 of the IPv2. Subgrantee applicants will have the opportunity to earn points for making forward-looking commitments to offering Montana prevailing wages to their BEAD project workforce.
 - Points will be awarded to applications based on both past record of compliance and commitment to offer prevailing wages. Applicants who meet all requirements for past compliance with federal fair labor laws will receive 13 points, while applicants with 1 past violation will receive 6 points, and applicants with more than 1 past violation will receive 0 points.

- Fair labor practices (cont'd)
 - Applicants who commit to offering prevailing wages (per Davis-Bacon) to their BEAD project workforce will receive an additional 2 points.
 - Additionally, applicants who do not have a record of compliance with federal labor and compliance laws (e.g., a new market entrant) may achieve the full 13 points by making forward-looking commitments to abide by all state and federal fair labor laws, and an additional 2 points by committing to offer prevailing wages (per Davis-Bacon) to their BEAD project workforce.
 - Applicants who fail to deliver on their forward-looking federal fair labor law commitments will be subject to clawback provisions.

- Speed to deployment (1 point maximum)
 - Subgrantee applicants will provide the timeframe (in months) in which they are making a binding commitment to complete deployment of their BEAD-funded broadband project. Completion of a BEAD-funded broadband project means that for all locations within a given project area, construction is completed, and a customer could receive service within 10 days upon request.
 - If an applicant commits to completing all of their BEAD-funded deployment in less than 48 months, that application would receive 1 point. If an applicant does not commit to completing all of their BEAD-funded deployment in less 48 months, that application would receive 0 points.
 - Applicants who fail to deliver on their deployment commitments will be subject to claw back provisions.

- Speed of network and other technical capabilities (1 point maximum)
 - Subgrantee applicants will provide both the maximum advertised speed they are committing to offer for a proposed project area, as well as the network design and proposed technologies to be used. A qualified engineer will review the speed and network design to ensure the proposed technology can achieve the specified speeds.
 - Points will be awarded for projects that exceed the minimum standard required to reach served status (100 Mbps download / 20 Mbps upload). Specifically, points will be calculated as follows: If a subgrantee applicant commits to and can reasonably deliver (based on the network design) speeds of at least 250 Mbps download / 50 Mbps upload and a latency of no more than 100 milliseconds, the application will receive 1 point.

- Unserved areas (14 points maximum)
 - When the MBO releases application materials for the subgrantee process, the list of un- and underserved locations within each CBG will also be published. Subgrantee applicants will create project areas comprised of one or more CBGs. Since subgrantees must bid on all un- and underserved locations in a CBG, the MBO will have the list of un- and underserved locations that each subgrantee applicant is committing to provide with broadband service.

- Unserved areas (cont'd)
 - Points will be awarded to applications based on the percentage of unserved locations in their proposed project area out of the total broadband serviceable locations in their proposed project area. Specifically, points will be calculated as follows: 1 point will be awarded for every 2% of unserved locations in the project area, up to the maximum threshold of 28% or more. Any project area that has over 28% of unserved locations will receive the maximum 14 points.
 - For example, if a project area contains 21% unserved locations, then the application would receive 10 points. If the project area contains 40% unserved locations, then the application would receive 14 points.

- Existing infrastructure (3 points maximum)
 - To receive points for existing infrastructure, subgrantee applicants
 will provide materials that shows their existing infrastructure in
 relation to their proposed network design for BEAD funded
 infrastructure. Qualifying infrastructure must be existing assets
 that could be leveraged as a part of the non-priority deployment.
 The qualifying infrastructure must either increase speed or
 decrease cost of deployment of the proposed technology.
 - Points will be awarded based on the proposed network design's proximity to the existing service area. Specifically, points will be calculated based on the existing infrastructure's distance to the proposed network design as indicated below.

Existing infrastructure (cont'd)

Proximity to proposed network design	Points
≤ 1 mile	3
> 1 and ≤ 10 miles	2
> 10 and ≤ 15 miles	1
> 15 miles	0



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 - Points will be awarded based on the length of time they have been providing broadband service in Montana. Specifically, points will be calculated as follows: 1 point will be awarded for every 10 years that a subgrantee applicant has been providing broadband service in Montana, up to the maximum of 4 points total.
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- Number of locations served (1 point maximum)
 - As mentioned above, subgrantee applicants will bid on project areas that represent one or more CBGs consisting of a defined set of un- and underserved Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs). In addition to the BSLs, the MBO will also publish the list of eligible Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs) within each CBG. Subgrantee applicants will specify in their applications how many CAIs they propose to deploy broadband service to.
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- Number of locations served (1 point maximum)
 - Specifically, points will be calculated as follows: 1 point will be awarded if an applicant's proposed number of locations (eligible BSLs and eligible CAIs) for a particular project area exceeds the average number of locations (eligible BSLs and eligible CAIs) across all project areas. No points will be awarded if the proposed number of locations (eligible BSLs and eligible CAIs) for a particular project area is less than the average number of locations (eligible BSLs and eligible CAIs) across all project areas.
 - For example, if the average number of locations (eligible BSLs and eligible CAIs) across all project areas is 5,000 and the number of locations (eligible BSLs and eligible CAIs) proposed for a particular project area is 6,000, the project area would receive 1 point. If the number of locations (eligible BSLs and eligible CAIs) proposed for a particular project area is 4,000, the project area would receive 0 points.

MAIN ROUND SCORING Q&A





UPCOMING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Upcoming Webinars			
Topic	Date	Time	
Financial Requirements	Friday, September 6, 2024	11 am - 12pm MT	
Technical Requirements	Tuesday, September 10, 2024	11 am - 12pm MT	
Programmatic Requirements	Friday, September 20, 2024	11 am - 12pm MT	
Q&A Part One	Friday, September 27, 2024	11 am - 12pm MT	
Q&A Part Two	Friday, October 04, 2024	11 am - 12pm MT	
Q&A Part Three	Tuesday, October 08, 2024	11 am - 12pm MT	

Where to find webinar links:

- All webinar dates, times, and links to register can be found at https://connectmt.mt.gov/Events/Upcoming.
- All webinars are recorded and posted on the ConnectMT website.

All dates are estimated and subject to change, please reference ConnectMT for any updates



PROGRAM RESOURCES

BEAD Program Information: https://connectmt.mt.gov

Initial Proposal Volumes 1 and 2: https://connectmt.mt.gov/IIJA/Funding

Frequently Asked Questions: https://connectmt.mt.gov/IIJA/FAQ

Technical Assistance Email: ConnectMTTechAssistance@mt.gov

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