MONTANA BEAD MAIN ROUND Q&A PART ONE

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INTRODUCTIONS

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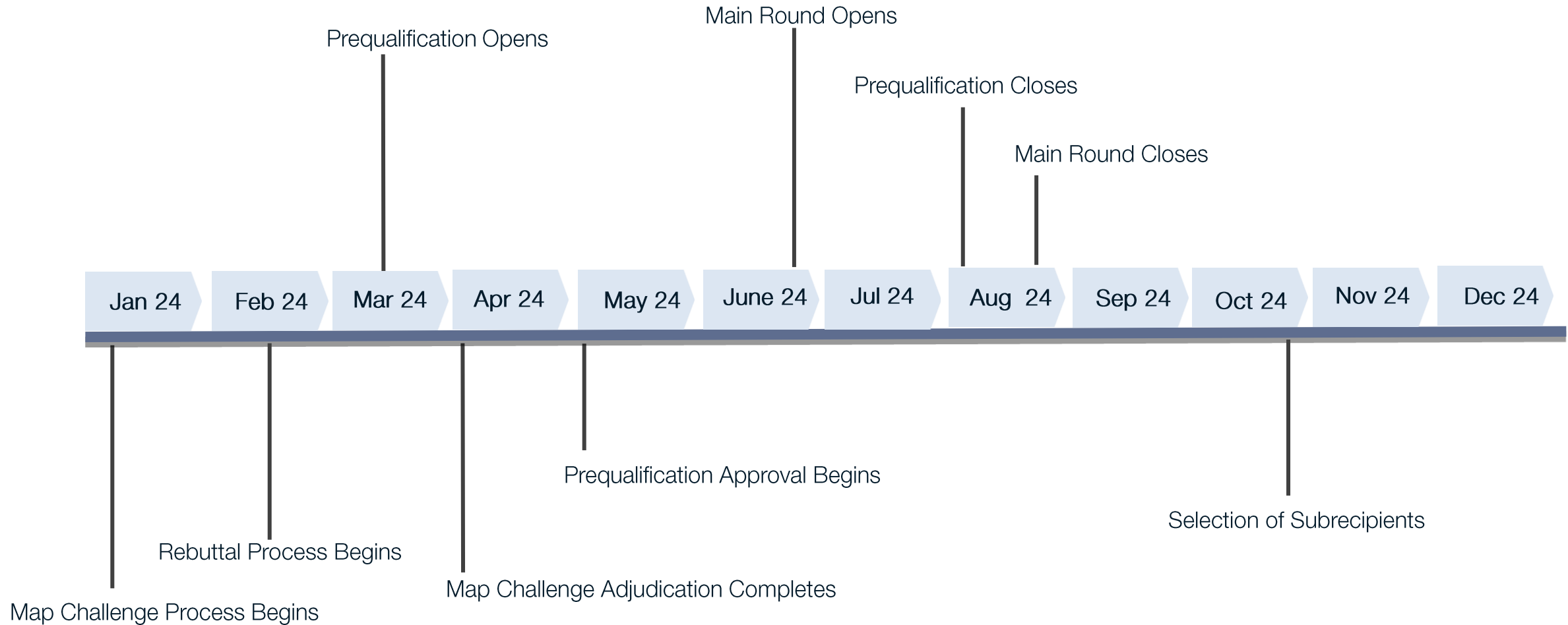- eric.law@summitllc.us

BEAD PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program is designed to expand high-speed internet access by funding planning, infrastructure deployment, and adoption programs across the country.

- The State of Montana was awarded $628 million in BEAD funding to connect all unserved 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

    - Main Round Application: Once prequalification is completed, applicants will be invited to submit proposals for projects as part of the main round

2024 PROGRAM TIMELINE

Prequalification Opens

Main Round Opens

Prequalification Closes

Main Round Closes

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

Prequalification Approval Begins

Selection of Subrecipients

Rebuttal Process Begins

Map Challenge Adjudication Completes

Map Challenge Process Begins

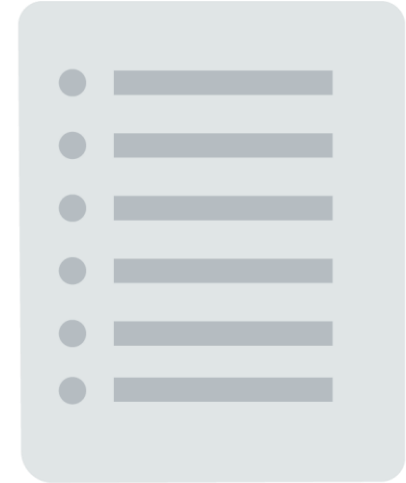*All dates are estimated and subject to change*

MAIN ROUND OVERVIEW

Purpose
- The purpose of the Main Round Application is to allow prequalified applicants to submit detailed project proposals for consideration under the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD).

Subgrantee Eligibility Requirements
- To receive BEAD funding, subgrantees must
  - Meet mandated financial requirements
  - Demonstrate the capability to provide broadband service in MT
  - Propose a project that will provide 100/20 service to all locations within service area within timeline
  - Certify ability to comply with all requirements mandated by NTIA and the State of Montana

UNDERSTANDING REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Applicants

- Eligible applicants for a subgrantee from the BEAD program include cooperatives, nonprofit organizations, public-private partnerships, private companies, public or private utilities, public utility districts, or local governments. Please note that, to begin the Main Round application, users must first provide information in the Prequalification section of the application. Applicants will have a chance to update this information if needed.

Eligible Program Areas

- The ConnectMT Broadband Office has opted to allow providers to define their desired project areas using existing Census Block Groups (CBGs). A list of the census block groups, associated Broadband Serviceable Locations, and benchmarking will be published before the main round application window opens.

Eligible Program Costs

- The BEAD NOFO (Notice of Funding Opportunity) defines eligible uses of funding in connection with last-mile broadband deployment projects.

PRIORITY vs. NON-PRIORITY

Overview
- To approach the process holistically, maximize competition, and give the State the most complete view of its service options, priority and non-priority bids will be accepted in tandem in the single main round.

Priority Application
- Project that will provide service via end-to-end fiber-optic facilities to each end-user premises
- Priority bids will be evaluated first for every project area

Non-Priority Application
- Any project that is not a priority project

APPLICATION OVERVIEW

Summary of Main Round Application
- Administrative
  - This section includes company details and primary and secondary contact information.
- Metrics
  - This section requests key metrics for the proposed broadband project including total project cost and total grant amount.
- Scoring Criteria
  - This section comprises project evaluation and compliance activities.
  - It covers aspects such as cost assessment, labor standards, completion timelines, infrastructure proximity, organizational tenure, and service provisions in HCAs.
- Financial Capability
  - This section allows for updates from the Prequalification application and submissions related to financial documentation.
- Organizational and Managerial Capacity
  - This section allows applicants to update and submit essential organizational documentation and certifications for their broadband project proposals, as well as provide additional programmatic information.

APPLICATION OVERVIEW

Summary of Main Round Application
- Project Staffing and Labor Requirements
  - This section focuses on project staffing and subcontracting plans, ensuring workforce qualifications, and addressing tribal land considerations.
- Project Plan
  - This section centers on the technical aspects and financial planning of the proposed broadband project.
- Compliance with Applicable Laws
  - This section focuses on ensuring that applicants meet the legal requirements mandated by federal, state, and local regulations.
- Environmental and Historical Preservation Compliance
  - This section focuses on the environmental and historical preservation requirements of the project.

BUILDING ON TRIBAL LAND

Building on Tribal Lands
- During the Main Round Application, an applicant must certify that they have already engaged with tribal authorities and commit that if awarded, they will provide a binding tribal resolution prior to receiving the final award.
- An applicant must upload documentation of initiating a tribal consent process or receiving tribal consent from the appropriate tribal authority as required in the BEAD NOFO.

Proposing Project on Tribal Lands
- If you are proposing a project on Tribal lands, please reach out to Director Misty Kuhl, Department of Indian Affairs, State of Montana at misty.kuhl@mt.gov and cc the ConnectMTTechAssistance@mt.gov
- This will help facilitate the process of coordinating with Tribal leadership.

MAIN ROUND Q&A PART ONE

Q&A

PROGRAM CONTACTS

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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DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION