



Montana Broadband Communications Advisory Commission Meeting

May 7, 2024

Topics of Discussion for May 2024 Commission Meeting



- Initial Proposal Volume I Update
- Initial Proposal Volume II Update
- Prequalification Updates
- Main Round
 - Application Timing
 - Application Requirements
 - Application Resources
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Digital Opportunity Program Capacity Grant
- Public Comment

Initial Proposal Volume I Update



Current State

What to Expect Next

- Submission to NTIA
- Publication of Preliminary Challenge Results
- NTIA Review and Approval of Challenge Results
- Publication of Approved Challenge Results

Initial Proposal Volume II Updates



- Initial Proposal Volume II

What to Expect Next

- IPV2 curing and resubmission (ongoing)
- IPV2 approval by NTIA (TBD)
- Final Proposal drafting
- Final Proposal CAC approval
- Final Proposal submission to NTIA

Prequalification Components



Component

Requirement

Financial

- Financial Statements
- Plan for Letter of Credit
- Certification by an Executive of Financial Capability

Organizational

- Key Resumes for Management Personnel
- Organizational Chart
- Past Performance
- Existing Projects

Certifications

- Workforce Certifications
- Business Certifications
- Compliance Certifications
- Ownership Information

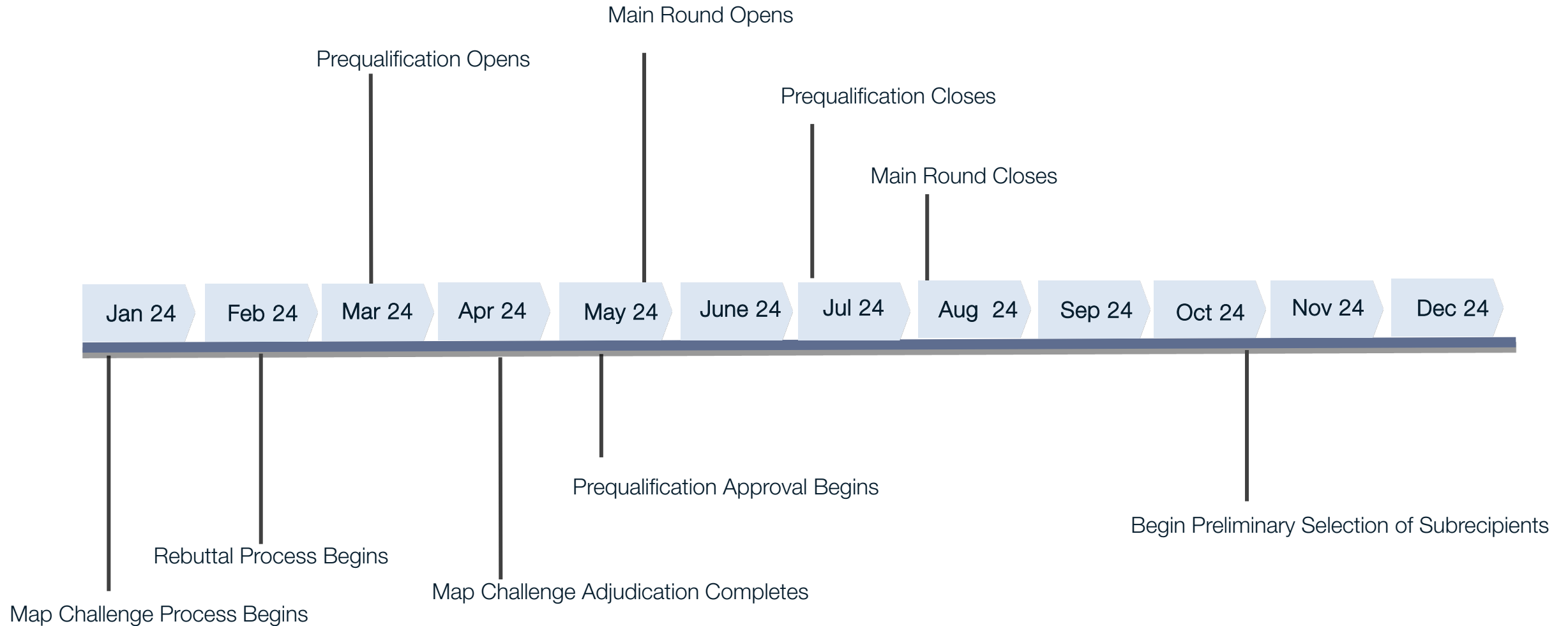
Prequalification Summary

7 applications received

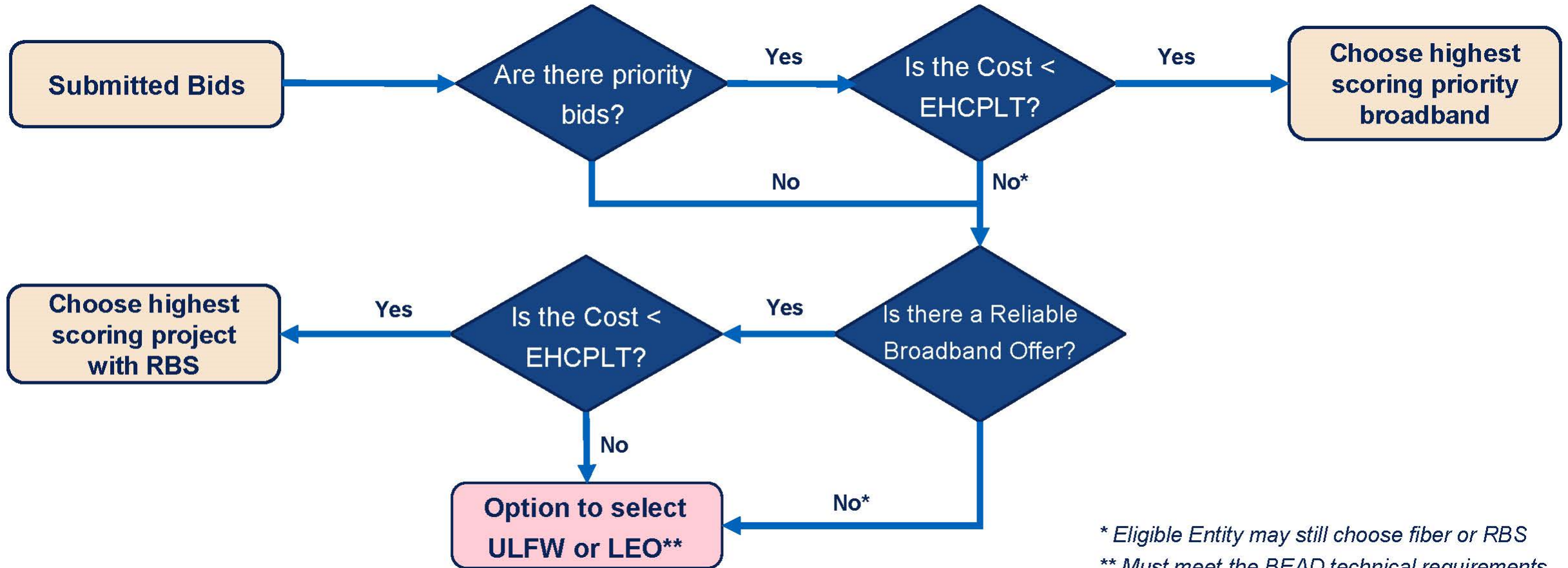


Potential 2024 BEAD Program Timeline

Subject to NTIA Approval

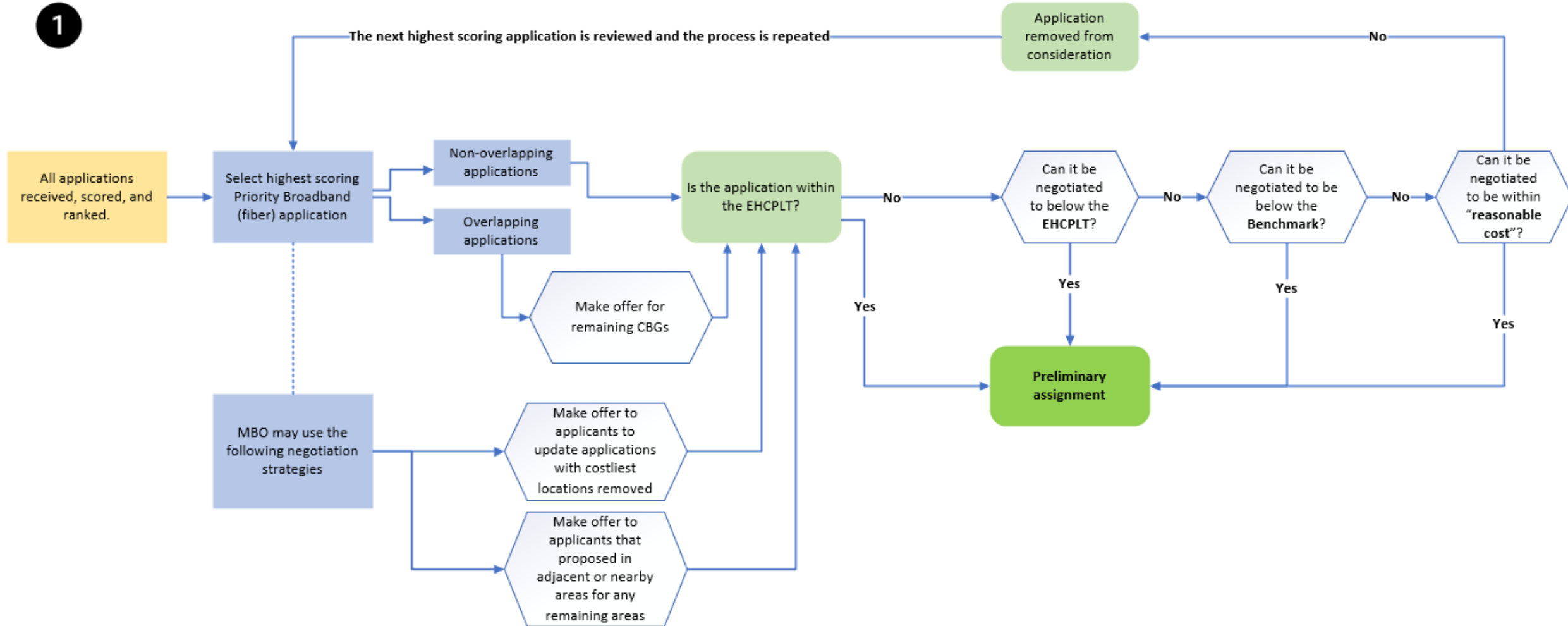


Process for Negotiation and Selection

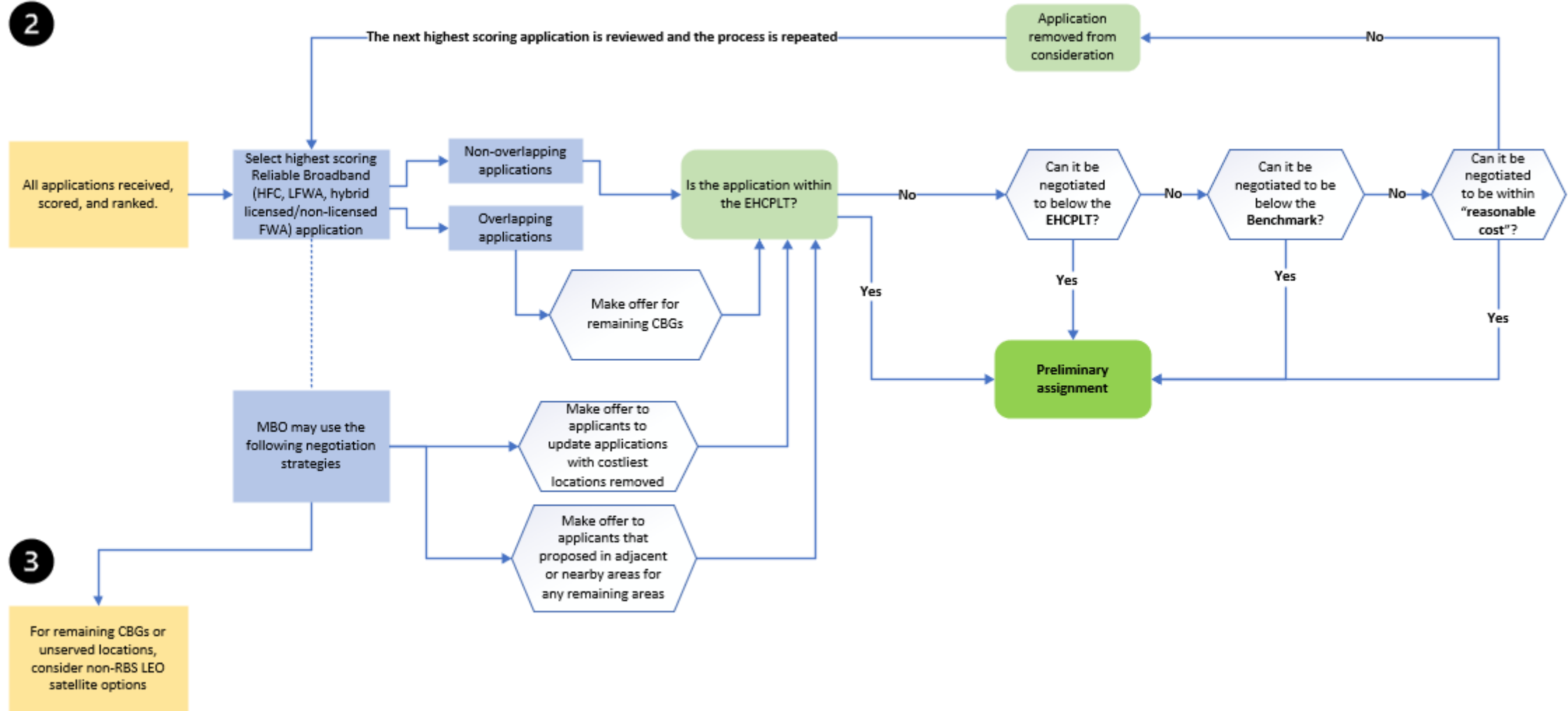


Process for Negotiation and Selection

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Process for Negotiation and Selection



Cost Reduction Template Explanation



Approach to Identifying Extremely High-Cost Locations:

Subgrantee applicants are encouraged to outline extremely high-cost locations within project area CBGs that if removed, would allow the potential subgrantee applicant to make a more competitive bid on the CBG..... Unserved BSLs that remain unawarded after both the main round application period and the targeted solicitation process will enter the remaining location tranche. For these locations, MBO may use its reserved right to remove extremely high-cost locations from the CBG to make it more attractive (and use alternative technologies for the extremely high-cost locations instead).” (source: IPV2 page 50, 67)

Project Cost Reduction Spreadsheet			
County Name	Census Block Group ID	FCC Location ID	Project Cost Reduction (from Descoping this Location)
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -

Main Round Components



Component	Requirement
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pro Forma, Business Plan, Letter of Credit, Availability of Funds
Organizational	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organizational Capacity and Risk Items
Project Staffing and Labor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resumes of Key Personal, Certifications for Staff Deployment, Subcontracting plan
Project Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Existing Infrastructure Illustration, Network Design Drawing, Project Cost Estimate, Project Timeline, Certification of Network Capability
Environmental and Historical Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information on Project Plan, Right of Way, and Categorical Exclusions
Scoring Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project information to determine score based on approved scoring rubric

Main Round Application Requirements Discussion



Eligible Expenses

- Is the cost of obtaining and maintaining an Irrevocable Letter of Credit (ILOC) or Performance Bond an eligible cost?
- Are reasonable pre-award costs incurred before the period of performance—allowable? If so, what parameters would the state like to set?
 - NTIA has indicated pre-award costs are allowable

Main Round Application Resources



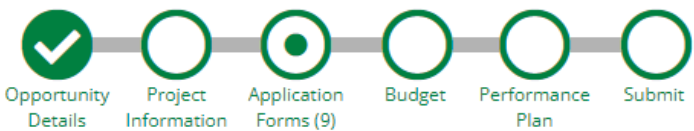
- List of Main Round Application Materials:
 - Main Round Application User Guide and FAQs
 - CBG Benchmarking
 - Scoring Rubric (released with IPV2)
 - CBG csv
 - Cost Reduction Template
 - Model Letter of Credit
 - Pro Forma template
 - Legal Opinion template (released with prequalification)
 - Project Cost Template
 - Project Timeline
 - Draft Grant Agreement

List is notional and may be updated upon approval of IPV2

Application System Demonstration



BEAD Main Round Application



Forms

Help

Download

Save & Continue

Name	Status	Print
Administrative	New	
Metrics	New	
Scoring Criteria	New	
Financial Capability	New	
Organizational and Managerial Capacity	New	
Project Staffing and Labor Requirements	New	
Project Plan	New	
Environmental and Historical Compliance	New	
Ownership Information	New	

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1 - 9 of 9 items

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Main Round Stakeholder Engagement and Technical Assistance



Proposed Technical Assistance			
Component	Topic	Anticipated Date	Mode
Main Round	Bidders Conference	04/25/2024 & 04/18/2024	In Person
Main Round	Main Round Overview	05/02/24	Webinar
Main Round	Main Round – Finance	05/10/24	Webinar
Main Round	Main Round – Project Area Design	05/14/24	Webinar
Main Round	Main Round – Technical	05/16/24	Webinar
Main Round	Main Round - Scoring	05/20/24	Webinar
Main Round	Main Round – Environmental	05/21/24	Webinar
Main Round	Main Round – Reporting	05/23/24	Webinar
Main Round	Main Round – Q&A Part 1	05/31/24	Webinar
Main Round	Main Round – Q&A Part 2	06/07/24	Webinar
Main Round	Main Round – Q&A Part 3	06/14/24	Webinar

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

All dates are estimated and subject to change



Recall: IJA BROADBAND FUNDING STREAMS

As of 20 November 2023

Details to follow

BEAD

\$42.45B

Broadband Equity, Access & Deployment Program

A program to get all Americans online by funding partnerships between states or territories, communities, and stakeholders to build infrastructure where we need it and increase adoption of high-speed internet.

DIGITAL EQUITY

\$2.75B

Digital Equity Act

Three programs that provide funding to promote digital inclusion and advance equity for all. They aim to ensure that all communities can access and use affordable, reliable high-speed internet to meet their needs and improve their lives.

TRIBAL

\$2.00B

Tribal Connectivity Technical Amendments

A program to help tribal communities expand high-speed internet access and adoption on tribal lands.

MIDDLE MILE

\$1.00B

Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure

A program to expand middle mile infrastructure, to reduce the cost of connecting unserved and underserved areas.



Recall: Digital Opportunity Program Overview

As of 6 May 2024

Summary: Three programs that provide funding to promote digital inclusion and advance equity for all. They aim to ensure that all communities can access and use affordable, reliable high-speed internet to meet their needs and improve their lives.

Funding Overview

Program	National	MT Allocation
State Planning	\$60M	\$600K
State Capacity Grant (formula)	\$1.44B	\$6.9 M
Competitive program	\$1.25B	N/A ¹



Key Considerations

- Planning efforts inform the State Capacity Grant Application (Formula funding)
- Program will cover a period of 5 years
- Funding will be provided on an annual basis

1. The Digital Equity Act Competitive Grant Program will be run by the NTIA and will select sub-recipients directly through a competitive process.



Potential digital opportunity program goals





Vision statement: To narrow the digital divide in support of Montana's economic, workforce, health, and educational goals by ensuring reliable, affordable internet access for all Montanans

Area	Program goals
Broadband Availability & Affordability	Ensure all Montana residents have access to affordable internet and necessary devices in their homes, schools, libraries, and businesses irrespective of their income level
Online Accessibility & Inclusivity	Reduce the digital divide among all Montana residents by increasing broadband adoption by covered populations and increasing access to online resources for all residents
Digital Literacy	Build digital skills to enhance broadband use through programs and partnerships with community stakeholders
Device Availability & Affordability	<p>Reduce the digital divide among Montana residents by ensuring widespread access to internet-capable devices</p> <p>Reduce the digital divide among state agencies by ensuring adequate internet-capable device inventory</p>
Online Privacy and Cyber-security	Ensure all Montana residents have access to internet that meets online privacy and cybersecurity standards

1. Sensitive information defined in "Fact Sheet: The FCC Adopts Order to Give Broadband Consumers Increased Choice Over Their Personal Information,"



Potential avenues to improve digital opportunity

Barrier	Potential programming or opportunity	<div>BEAD requirements</div> <div>Potential focus areas</div>	Existing efforts
 Access	A Connect the unserved: Last-mile and associated middle-mile deployment of broadband technologies to areas without service of at least 25/3		✓
	B Upgrade the underserved: Deploying and/or upgrading technologies to areas with service below 100/20		✓
	C Invest in community anchor institutions: Ensure reliable high-speed access at CAIs or identify opportunities in non-traditional CAIs		✓
 Affordable subscriptions	D Increase ACP uptake: Educate, support & encourage uptake among eligible subscribers		
	E Subscription subsidies: Provide additional subsidies to further reduce broadband cost		
	F Offer low-cost plans: Partner with ISPs to develop and promote low-cost high-speed internet plans		✓
 Devices access	G CAI loan programs: Allow Montanans to rent devices for free or low-cost from CAIs		✓
	H CAI access points: Create device access terminals in CAIs, taking advantage of the high-speed broadband and existing community access		✓
	I Device subsidies: Provide direct subsidies to purchase internet-capable devices		
	J Through strategic partnerships: Working with businesses or community organizations, share device funding and distribution responsibilities, negotiate bulk rates with device manufacturers		
 Digital literacy	K Develop digital skills curricula: Deploy training programs through state entities and targeted industries		✓
	L Fund targeted training programs: Upskill individuals through classes and training programs, with potential focus on Covered Populations (e.g., aging individuals, individuals in rural areas, veterans)		
	M Stand-up digital navigator programs: Deploy navigators in communities to develop specific understanding of barriers in community, and coordinate resourcing as needed		

Digital Opportunity Notice of Funding Opportunity Overview



Key Components of the Digital Opportunity Capacity Grant Program

- Focus on Covered Populations:
 - *Focus on the priorities of the Covered Populations being served, including subgroups within each covered population*
- Long-lasting and Meaningful Change:
 - *Projects/activities must address the systemic barriers and gaps to digital access with a particular focus on sustainability of initiatives*
- Measurable Implementation Strategies:
 - *Programs/activities should be based on objectives that are measurable, achievable, sustainable, timebound, and designed to address identified disparities*
- Stakeholder Engagement:
 - *Stakeholders directly affected by proposed strategies/interventions should be involved in ongoing feedback loops and input on potential solutions/improvements*

Eligible Uses of Funds

- Updating and Maintaining State Plan
- State Plan Implementation Activities
- Evaluation
- Administrative Costs

Digital Opportunity Plan – Implementation Strategy



■ State Library

- Access to online education for professional development, digital literacy and skill building; network upgrades for 60 libraries statewide.
- Access to devices with reliable high-speed broadband.
- Hot spots and data plans for select libraries offering services.

■ DPHHS

- Access to Office of Public Assistance through customer kiosks
 - Allows Montanans to apply for programs, access personal public assistance accounts and submit verification documentation.
 - Search educational information and access training and employment opportunities.
 - Funding supports purchase, placement and maintenance of kiosks.

■ Dept. of Corrections

- Access to devices for training, employment, housing and support services.
- Implementation and expansion of educational programs (Second Chance Pell, Last Mile Coding).
- Development and implementation of device monitoring pilot program.

■ MSDB

- Access to devices and equipment with reliable high-speed broadband for education and training.
- Support to provide specialized device training.

What to Expect and Next Steps...

- Digital Opportunity Capacity Grant Application due May 28, 2024.
- Application Cycle for tribal communities will open on September 25, 2024, and close on February 7, 2025.

Public Comment

