



# Montana BEAD Technical Assistance Q&A Part Five

October 29, 2024

# BEAD PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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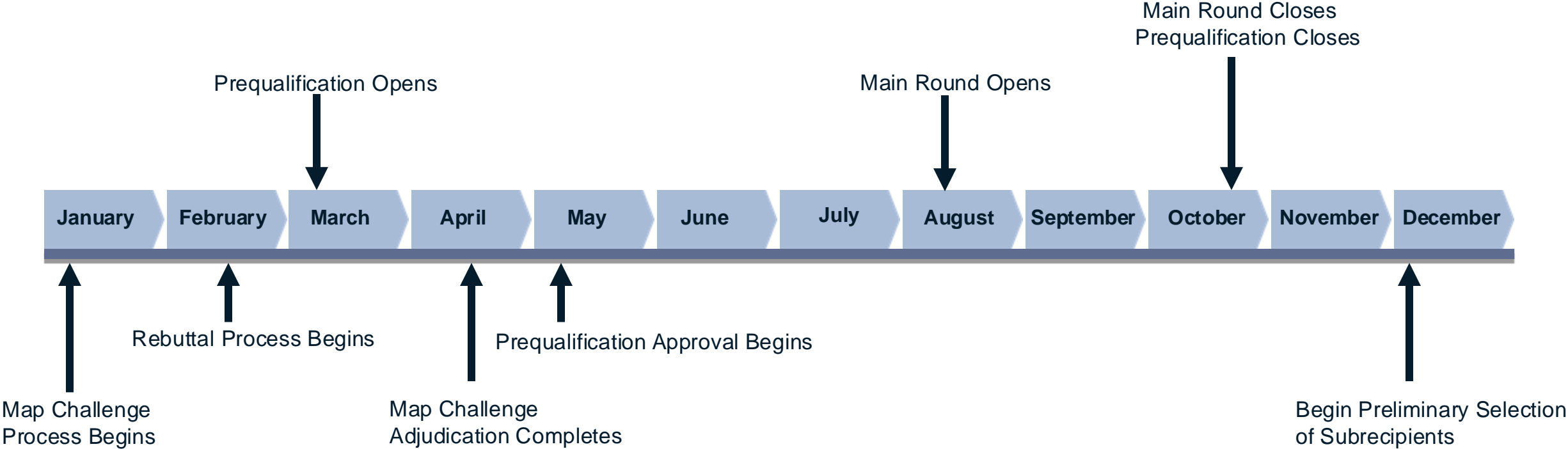
- The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program is designed to expand high-speed internet access by funding planning, infrastructure deployment, and adoption programs across the country.
- The state of Montana was awarded close to \$629 million in BEAD funding to connect all unserved and underserved 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.
  - **Main Round Application:** Once prequalification is completed, applicants will be invited to submit proposals for projects as part of the main round.

## BEAD Program Dates:

- BEAD Main Round opened Tuesday, August 13, 2024.
- BEAD Main Round Application and BEAD Prequalification Application closes Thursday, October 31st.



# 2024 BEAD PROGRAM TIMELINE



# MAIN ROUND OVERVIEW

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- 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.

## **Please Note:**

- To begin the Main Round application, users must first provide information in the Prequalification section of the application.



# MAIN ROUND REQUIREMENTS

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- **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.



# UPDATED APPLICATION DEADLINE

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- October 10, 2024, Montana received approval of the Challenge Results from NTIA.
- Montana is committed to ensure that potential applicants have sufficient time to complete applications based on accurate eligible location data.
- Montana will keep Prequalification and Main Round Application portals open until October 31, 2024, three weeks after approval of the Challenge Results.
- Approved challenge results data has been posted to the ConnectMT website.
  - The Montana Broadband Availability Map is currently being updated.



# PRIORITY VS NON-PRIORITY

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- 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 main round.
- **Priority Application Project:** Applications that will provide service via end-to-end fiber-optic facilities to each end-user premise; these applications will be evaluated first for every project area.
- **Non-Priority Application Project:** Applications that propose a Reliable Broadband Service 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 Q&A PART FIVE

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# Q&A





# PROGRAM RESOURCES

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**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](mailto:ConnectMTTechAssistance@mt.gov)

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