



5 Winning Strategies For BEAD Grant Applications

#1 Understand the BEAD timeline and where your state is in the application process

The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD) provides federal funding for broadband planning, deployment, mapping, equity, and adoption activities. Grants are provided to states, which in turn will run competitive grant processes for local governments. All states and territories have [received planning grants](#), and most states have now completed [BEAD Five Year Action Plans](#). Additionally, every state has to undergo a [broadband mapping challenge process](#) to determine where households are unserved and underserved.

Local governments can engage in this process in a number of ways. For one, cities should review and [submit comments](#) on their state's five-year action plan to inform how best to extend broadband to currently unserved and underserved areas (see [page 5 of the BEAD FAQ](#) for definitions of unserved and underserved). Local governments should also review their state's broadband maps and weigh in—particularly if the state's determination of unserved and underserved locations does not match with the local understanding of community needs. As a starting point, cities can look towards the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) [National Broadband Map](#), which displays broadband access by address for the entire U.S. Local governments should expect to receive BEAD funds once these steps are complete, likely in late 2024 or early 2025.



BEAD prioritizes unserved locations that have no internet access or that only have access under 25/3 Mbps and underserved locations that only have access under 100/20 Mbps.

#2 Budget for Match Requirements

The BEAD NOFO encourages states to require a match from subgrantees (25% of program costs), so local governments should budget to provide matching funds. Additional details of the matching requirements can be found in the [NOFO](#). Note that cities can apply American Rescue Plan Fiscal Recovery Dollars towards the match; federal regional commissions and authorities can also assist in funding the match.

#3 Prioritize Coverage for Unserved and Underserved Communities

States are required to incorporate complete coverage for all unserved locations and, if remaining funds are sufficient, all underserved locations. Once those locations have been funded, the next funding priority is community anchor institutions, including schools, libraries, hospitals, colleges, public housing organizations, and community support organizations. This is why it is important for local governments to review state broadband mapping, as it will determine the level of priority that a particular location receives in the competition.



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#4 Understand Workforce Expectations for BEAD Subgrantees

As a condition of their BEAD grant, states have to submit a workforce plan to the NTIA, which [expects](#) subgrantees like local governments to demonstrate compliance with and commitment to federal and local labor laws, as well as a commitment to building the highly skilled and equitable workforce necessary to achieve BEAD's goal of reaching 100% of unserved locations.

States are encouraged to establish selection criteria for subgrantees related to advancing equitable workforce development. This means that local governments that put in place apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, joint labor management partnerships, community benefit agreements, and other high-quality, on-the-job training opportunities will be at a competitive advantage when state competitions are released.

For example, the City of Portland, Oregon [has developed](#) a community equity and inclusion plan and a community benefit agreement to promote diversity in the construction trade, with specific training targets for women and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).



#5 Take Advantage of Funds for Last Mile Deployment Projects

Local governments should familiarize themselves with "[last-mile](#)" deployment projects, which are projects that connect end users to broadband infrastructure (for example, a broadband connection being connected to a residence).

Eligible uses of funding for last-mile broadband deployment projects include:

- Construction, improvement, and/or acquisition of broadband facilities.
- Long-term leases (for terms greater than one year) of broadband facilities.
- Deployment of residential internet and WiFi infrastructure.
- Engineering design, permitting, and related work.
- Personnel costs, including salaries and fringe benefits.
- Network software upgrades, including, but not limited to, cybersecurity solutions.