

**Idaho Broadband Advisory Board
&
Idaho Office of Broadband**

**Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD)
*Regional Coordination and Planning Grant***

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Background

Federal

The Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program was established through the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (IIJA) and provides \$42.45 billion to deploy high-speed broadband infrastructure across the United States. This money is being allocated through the National Telecommunications and Information Association (NTIA).

State

Idaho received an allocation of \$583,256,249.88 in BEAD funds for broadband infrastructure deployment across the state, intended for unserved and underserved broadband serviceable locations (BSLs). The money is being administered through the Idaho Office of Broadband (IOB), within the Idaho Department of Commerce. The spending authority will be at the direction of the Idaho Broadband Advisory Board.

Idaho Broadband Advisory Board

The Idaho Broadband Advisory Board (IBAB) is a 9-member voting Board that was established by the Idaho Legislature in 2021 to structure, prioritize and disperse state and federal broadband monies. The Board consists of three members of the Idaho House of Representatives, three members from the Idaho Senate, and three members appointed by the Idaho Governor.

IBAB is committed to improving access to broadband infrastructure for Idahoans, and recognizes that access to affordable, accessible, and reliable high-speed internet is one of the most critical infrastructure challenges facing Idaho citizens in today's economy. See the State's Broadband Strategic Plan [here](#).

Regional Coordination & Planning Grant

On July 13, 2022, IBAB voted in favor of allocating \$500,000 from the State's \$4,376,087.09 in BEAD Initial Planning Funds for BEAD Regional Coordination and Planning. This \$500,000 allocation is via the State's BEAD funds; therefore,

all expenditures and grant policy must be approved by NTIA; follow BEAD rules, regulations, and guidelines; and be approved by the Board.

See IBAB meeting minutes from July, 2022 [here](#).

This \$500,000 allows cities, counties and state entities or agencies to develop and support Broadband Action Teams or Broadband Coalitions. These funds are also intended for local jurisdictions to support local-level community broadband leaders and provide funding for education and outreach efforts. These monies can be leveraged to plan and strategize on how to improve the community's distance learning, telehealth and telework opportunities.

Definitions

- a. Administration Costs:** the costs of administering the Capital Projects Fund by a grantee, providing technical assistance to potential subgrantees, and complying with grant administration and audit requirements.
- b. Community Anchor Institution (CAI):** an entity such as a school, library, health clinic, health center, hospital or other medical provider, public safety entity, institution of higher education, public housing organization, or community support organization.
- d. Broadband Infrastructure:** networks of deployed telecommunications equipment, conduit, and technologies necessary to provide broadband and other advanced telecommunications services to wholesalers or end users, including but not limited to, private homes, businesses, commercial establishments, schools, or public institutions.
- e. Broadband provider:** any entity that (a) provides broadband services, including but not limited to, a telecommunications provider, cable service provider, broadband provider, cellular provider, political subdivision that provides broadband services, electric cooperative that provides broadband services, electric utility that provides broadband services, state government entity that provides broadband services, tribal government that provides broadband services, or internet service provider; or (b) builds broadband infrastructure, including but not limited to, a port, nonprofit organization, or private-public partnership established for the purpose of expanding broadband in the state.
- g. Government Facilities:** includes, but is not limited to, public safety facilities, City Hall, parks, civic and community centers, courthouses, state agencies and public infrastructure facilities.
- h. Last Mile Infrastructure:** serves as the final leg connecting the broadband service provider's network to the end-user's on-premises telecommunications equipment.
- i. Middle Mile Infrastructure:** links a broadband service provider's core network infrastructure to last-mile infrastructure.
- j. Open Access Network:** an arrangement in which the grantee offers nondiscriminatory access to and use of its middle-mile network on a wholesale basis to

other providers seeking to provide broadband service to end-user locations, at reasonable and competitive wholesale rates for the useful life of the network assets.

m. Unserved Locations: locations without access to reliable broadband service of 25/3Mbps.

n. Underserved Locations: locations without access to reliable broadband service of 100/20Mbps.

Broadband Action Teams or Broadband Coalitions

Strong involvement from local communities is vital to ensure that broadband needs of all unserved, underserved, and underrepresented communities are accounted for in the BEAD planning and deployment process. Regional coordination promotes alignment of priorities between the state and its communities and helps ensure visibility of local needs and preferences. Robust community engagement efforts increase initial adoption rates once broadband infrastructure is deployed and will dramatically increase awareness of broadband benefits.

Regional coordination also helps identify and establish Regional Broadband Leaders for digital skills teaching after the infrastructure has been established and the internet is fully accessible. This grant is the foundation for successful broadband implementation and adoption in Idaho's most rural communities.

Broadband Action Teams (BATs) or Broadband Coalitions are critical for successful infrastructure placement, as well as for digital skills education. Establishing and developing BATs includes, but is not limited to:

- Getting residents involved in local efforts.
- Educating community members about BEAD funds and developing local plans.
- Educating community members about other funding recently received as well as current/future opportunities.
- Speed tests.
- Asset mapping.
- Digital literacy & skills development.

BEAD Regional Coordination and Planning Grant Objectives

- Integrate local plans into Idaho's Statewide BEAD Program by supporting and expanding local-level education, outreach and engagement efforts.
- Support the development and plans of Broadband Action Teams or Broadband Coalitions.
- Enable Broadband Action Teams or Broadband Coalitions to mobilize people and organizations.
- Increase awareness of broadband efforts across Idaho.

- Increase participation in infrastructure planning by engaging local communities.

BEAD Regional Coordination and Planning Grant Priorities

- Build local-level experience with or knowledge of internet funding, access, adoption and affordability. This can include, but is not limited to, understanding funding sources and application opportunities, identifying barriers and challenges, increasing community engagement and getting creative with partnerships, collaboration and solutions.
- Engage rural and Tribal stakeholders in unserved and underserved communities.
- Develop local, regional teams that will conduct and support education, outreach and engage their communities in Idaho broadband efforts.
- Establish and leverage existing, trusted relationships with the communities that are targeted populations.
- Provide technical assistance and subject matter expertise.
- Function as local-level liaison(s) between the community, the Idaho Office of Broadband, and technical experts for the purpose of education, outreach, and engagement.

Max Award: up to \$50,000.

Eligible Applicants

Only specific governmental entities in Idaho are eligible to apply for the Idaho BEAD Regional Coordination and Planning Grant. Within Idaho, the following entities are eligible to apply:

- Eligible applicants must be an Idaho local or tribal government as described in Section 67-1226, Idaho Code, or a state agency. For ease of administration, the Regional Coordination and Planning Grant adopts the definition of Idaho local governments described in Section 67-1226, Idaho Code. County governments may apply for grants on behalf of unincorporated communities.

Ineligible Applicants

The purpose of the Regional Coordination and Planning Grant is to educate and support the residents of Idaho and is foundational for broadband adoption in Idaho's most rural

locations. Therefore, these funds are intended for local jurisdictions and communities to develop and support BATs or Broadband Coalitions that are sustainable through relationships that reflect community engagement.

Internet service providers are not eligible to participate in the Idaho BEAD Regional Coordination and Planning Grant as stand-alone applicants; however, public-private-partnerships and collaboration are strongly encouraged. Think regionally and geographically to help leverage existing infrastructure and resources.

Broadband providers can partner with at least one “Eligible Applicant” and be considered for funding. The “Eligible Applicant” will lead Regional Coordination and Planning efforts and be the primary point of contact and liaison for all elements related to the Idaho BEAD Regional Coordination and Planning Grant.

For municipal broadband providers, the exclusion of broadband providers and their affiliates, subsidiaries, or representatives from eligibility does not extend to separate arms of the municipality that maintain, manage, or operate the municipal broadband network.

Eligible Expenses for Idaho BEAD Regional Coordination Grant

IOB will consider applications for the following activities:

- (1) Broadband Action Team development, meetings, and related events.
 - Personnel, Fringe Benefits, Contractual: Compensation for personnel (full/part-time or contract staff) whose time is spent exclusively on planning and executing BAT outreach and engagement activities and awareness campaigns.
 - Costs associated with supporting existing or ongoing BATs and/or coalitions that align with federal grant costs.
 - Travel: Travel to and from BAT outreach events to include mileage, gas, and related travel incidentals for outreach personnel as well as BAT members or attendees, if needed, to ensure engagement and participation. Travel costs must be in line with Federal Travel Policies, including 2 C.F.R. §200.
 - Supplies: Materials required to host in-person events, including but not limited to flyers, notepads, clipboards, virtual conferencing, leased technology tools (grant funds will not support purchase of technology tools).
 - Marketing Materials: media placement, direct mail, factsheets, newsletters, etc.
 - Other: Light refreshments for in-person BAT outreach meetings and events. Facility rentals for in-person BAT outreach. These charges must be in line with Federal Travel Policies.

- (2) Asset mapping, feasibility studies, preliminary design/engineering reports, technical planning, and/or grant writing. Costs for professional consulting services. Grant writer costs, RFI/RFP preparation and project management
- (3) Speed testing and speed tests.
- (4) Permitting fees.
- (5) Initiatives associated with the State's BEAD Challenge Process.
- (6) Costs accrued from the opening of the grant.

Unallowable Cost Categories

- Infrastructure and capital equipment, provider branded materials, gifts and incentives, membership fees, real property, construction or renovation, entertainment/alcohol/meals, fundraising, general government costs, and goods or services for personal use.
- Property or capital that is purchased for ownership.
- Any costs or fees related to broadband infrastructure deployment, apart from contractors that help facilitate permit conversations.
- Expenses related to providing broadband services.
- Ongoing overhead and/or operating costs.
- Political activities or lobbying.
- Alcohol or alcohol related supplies.

Grant Administration

Recipients must administer their own grants and comply with federal rules and regulations. However, if approved by a resolution of their governing body, city and county governments may designate a non-profit organization or contractor to administer its grant; however, the grantee will be responsible for ensuring the third party is managing the grant appropriately and is in compliance.

Cost Sharing and Matching

There will be no cost sharing or matching requirements. However, applicants that propose a cost match or cost share will be given priority consideration, among other

considerations, in the event of a tie when making funding determinations. Cost share or cost match may be cash or in-kind contribution.

Grant application reviews will include two rounds, if needed. Each round is open for a 21-day period.

Important Dates

- Grant application portal opens: March 6, 2024
- First grant round closes: March 27, 2024 @ 11:59pm (MT)
 - First round grant announcements: *Est.* April 8, 2024
- Second grant round grant closes: April 17, 2024 @ 11:59pm (MT)*
 - Second round grant announcements: *Est.* May 6, 2024*

**Note: The grant application portal will remain open and accepting applications until funds are exhausted. The Idaho Office of Broadband reserves the right to leave the application opportunity window open as well as close the opportunity window based on funding availability.*

Period of Performance

The period of performance for the Regional Coordination and Planning Grant is 18 months from date of award.

Extensions to the period of performance may be allowed on a case-by-case basis with prior written approval from the Idaho Office of Broadband (IOB) and based on BEAD timelines.

Budget, Eligible Costs (applicant to provide)

Applicants will be required to provide justification and details related to project costs such as:

- Personnel
- Fringe Benefits
- Travel
- Supplies
- Contracts
- Other

Scoring Criteria

Proposals for Idaho’s BEAD Regional Coordination and Planning Grants must describe how the entity plans to identify and engage local stakeholders within a geographic coverage area to build local understanding of the community’s broadband landscape, implementing broadband solutions and infrastructure, and incorporating digital inclusion activities and programs. Proposals also must outline the scope of work or work plans supportive of local coordination and readiness to participate in the State’s BEAD Program.

Scoring will be based on the level of detail provided in answering the questions below and should describe a well-constructed plan outlining local engagement. The IOB understands that plans can change during implementation; therefore, consistent communication between Regional Coordination and Planning Grant Awardees and the IOB will be expected.

Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Average (3)	Fair (2)	Incomplete (1)	No Response (0)
Response is innovative and impactful.	Response is clear and feasible.	Response needs clarity and further planning.	Response lacks sufficient detail.	Minimal response provided.	No Response Provided.
QUESTION				SCORE	
1) Proposal abstract or executive summary. Is this a new effort or a continuation of an existing effort?				5 points	
2) Is your entity an Idaho local or tribal government as described in Section 67-1226, Idaho Code, a state agency, or a county government applying on behalf of an unincorporated community?				5 points	
4) What is your familiarity with broadband, economic development, outreach, and/or similar government programs?				10 points	
5) Describe your experience with and past success in conducting				15 points	

outreach, providing/sourcing relevant resources, and directing services and education to target populations.		
6) briefly outline your project priorities and describe how you plan to engage target communities and address low participation rates.		10 points
7) Describe your existing, trusted relationships with the communities that you expect to target, or the ability to readily establish those relationships.		15 points
8) Select the application program objectives the project intends to support and explain how this will further broadband goals.		10 points
9) Provide a detailed budget breakdown of all proposed costs, including computation method.		10 points
Describe cost share or matching contribution.		Not scored.
Total Score = /80		