

Idaho Broadband Advisory Board

Interim Plan

In 2021, the Idaho Legislature passed House Bill 127 creating the Idaho Broadband Fund, which would have oversight by the newly created Idaho Broadband Advisory Board.

The Board was created within the statute under the Idaho Department of Commerce and is responsible for creating a statewide broadband plan that will determine the manner of structuring, prioritizing, and dispersing grants from the fund.

The broadband plan must be adopted by a majority vote of the advisory board and shall be maintained and revised as necessary. Expenditures from the fund will be prioritized based on the adopted statewide broadband plan pursuant to section 67-4761, Idaho code, and must be approved by the board.

The board currently oversees \$35M in state appropriated dollars. Additional federal dollars may be appropriated to the Idaho Broadband Fund including dollars from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), both of which have specific federal rules and guidelines.

In light of these additional ARPA and IIJA dollars that will be granted to the State of Idaho and will be awarded based on priorities outlined by the Idaho Broadband Advisory Board's plan, The Idaho Broadband Advisory Board will need to modify their original timeline to construct a 5 year plan that will meet federal government guidelines so the state can take advantage of the unprecedented infrastructure dollars available to Idaho.

This 5 year broadband action plan and final proposal will need to include grant program design and administration, technical review, auditing, grant compliance, procurement, data collection and reporting. Infrastructure planning also includes feasibility studies, broadband inventory analysis, gap analysis, community, and stakeholder outreach. This will include RFP drafting, execution, and applicant negotiation.

The immediate plan for the Idaho Broadband Advisory Board is as follows:

1. Hire a strategic planning firm to start the formation of the Broadband Plan by January 1, 2022
2. Approve governance for the Idaho Broadband Advisory Board by December 21, 2022
3. Direct \$10,000 amount of the Idaho Broadband Fund from Trustee and Benefits to Operating Expenses for expenditures for strategic planning costs and/or consulting work, all of which must be approved by the board prior to being contracted for or expended. This is to be completed by January 1, 2022

4. Direct the Idaho Department of Commerce to facilitate the procurement and RFP process with the Department of Administration to secure a technical broadband consultant to assist with the finalization of a statewide 5-year broadband plan, grant technical review, and grant audit. Procurement is to start by January 15, 2022 and finalized by April 1, 2022.
5. Working with the selected and approved strategic planning firm and/or consultant(s), the Idaho Broadband Advisory Board, the Idaho Department of Commerce, and 3rd parties will coordinate work and deliver a statewide broadband action plan no later than July 1, 2022.

PENDING A VOTE AND BOARD APPROVAL, FUTURE LANGUAGE MAY READ:

This has been approved and adopted by the majority of the Idaho Broadband Advisory Board in accordance with sections 67-4760 and 67-4761, Idaho Code.

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