

nrtc FUNDING ALERT!

Professional assistance for today's unprecedented funding opportunities



Funding Amount: **\$1.024 billion**

APPLICATION

Program Details

Program Name: Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD)

Administrator: Arkansas State Broadband Office

Match Requirement: 25% Match required

Key Dates

- **January 7, 2025 – Tranche 1** Application window open for those who completed Prequalification Phase and receive invitation to apply
- **January 21, 2025 – Tranche 1** Application window closes
- **February 25, 2025 – Tranche 2** Application window opens
- **March 11, 2025 – Tranche 2** Application window closes

Eligible Applicants

- Cooperatives
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Public-Private Partnerships
- Private Companies
- Public or Private Utilities
- Public Utility Districts
- Local Governments

Eligible Projects

- Qualifying last-mile broadband projects to unserved (25/3 Mbps or less) and underserved (between 25/3 and 100/20 Mbps) locations

Eligible Areas

- Eligible locations will be grouped by Census Block Groups (CBG's)
- Applicants must serve all eligible locations within a selected CBG
- Applications with multiple CBG's must be contiguous (sharing a border or corner)

Eligible Costs

- Construction, improvement, and/or acquisition of facilities and telecommunications equipment, infrastructure for backhaul, middle and last-mile networks, and MDUs
- Long-term leases of facilities to provide qualifying broadband service, including IRUs
- Deployment of internet and Wi-Fi within an eligible multi-family residential building
- Network software upgrades
- Engineering design, permitting, and work related to environmental, historical, and cultural reviews
- Personnel costs, including salaries and fringe benefits for staff and consultants
- Training for cybersecurity professionals working on BEAD-funded networks
- Workforce development including Registered Apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, and community college and/or vocational training for broadband-related occupations

Selection Criteria

Scoring (maximum of 100 points):

Primary criteria

- **Minimal BEAD Outlay (up to 40 points):** Score assessed based on how high or low applicant's grant request is relative to the reference subsidy for the CBGs
- **Affordability (up to 25 points):** Score assessed on how high or low commitments are relative to the reference prices for the tier of service:
 - Priority bids (1/1 Gbps service): \$85 per month
 - Non-priority bids (100/20 Mbps service): \$37 per month
- **Fair Labor Practices (up to 10 points):** Applicants will receive 10 points for demonstrated compliance with federal labor laws over the last three years and providing forward-looking plans to comply. Applicants without three years of operational experience can receive 10 points by signing a certification of future compliance and providing forward-looking plans to be in compliance

- Opportunity Evaluation
- Effective Grant Writing
- A Track Record of Success

Selection Criteria (cont'd)

Secondary criteria

- **Speed Deployment (up to 3 points):** Timelines should span no more than 48 months from date applicant receives notice of final award. Timelines shorter than 24 months receive 3 additional points
- **Speed, latency and other technical issues (up to 2 points):**
 - **2 points** for bids to deploy XGS-PON fiber technology
 - **1.5 points** for bids to deploy non-XGS-PON fiber technology
 - **1 point** for 1000/500 Mbps non-fiber technology
 - **.5 point** for 400/200 Mbps non-fiber technology
 - **0 points** for technology with more than 100 milliseconds of latency

Additional criteria

- **Workforce support (up to 5 points):** Points awarded based on workforce support plans
- **Scale of geographic coverage (up to 5 points):**
 - **5 points** for covering 100% of eligible locations within a CBG
 - **5 points** for covering up to 3000 locations within a selected CBG
 - **4 points** for covering up to 2000 locations within a selected CBG
 - **3 points** for covering up to 1500 locations within a selected CBG
 - **2 points** for covering up to 100 locations within a selected CBG
 - **1 point** for covering up to 500 locations within a selected CBG
- **Inclusion of zero-bid CBG's (up to 5 points):** Points awarded based on the number of zero-bid CBGs included in their tranche two bid. Each zero-bid CBG will be worth one-half point
- **Local Coordination (up to 2.5 points):** Applicants encouraged to submit letters of support from local governments, applicants receive a half point for each letter, up to 2.5 points maximum
- **Weather resiliency (up to 2.5 points):** Applicants will receive points based on weather resiliency measures
 - **1 point** for plans to bury at least 85% of fiber
 - **1 point** for a weather mitigation plan
 - **.5 point** for committing to attend municipal emergency management meetings

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Application Process

- Applicants must have been approved during the Prequalification Phase

Links & Contacts

- [ARConnect BEAD Application Guide](#)
- [ARConnect BEAD Applicant Primer](#)
- [ARConnect Grant Portal](#)
- [AR State Broadband Map](#)
- [AR BEAD Program information](#)
- Questions: [Arkansas Grants Program Helpdesk](#)

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