



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
OFFICE OF BROADBAND
JB Pritzker, Governor



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SYSTEM

Closing the Digital Divide in Illinois

BEAD Deep-Dive Webinar: BEAD-funded Connect Illinois Round 4 NOFO Overview

December 11, 2024

BEAD Deep Dive Webinar Series:

Context and Goals



Context:

To align with NTIA requirements, BEAD-funded Connect Illinois Round 4 **differs from Connect Illinois Rounds 1-3**

The Illinois Office of Broadband aims to **help all interested applicants become familiar** with these requirements ahead of the subgrantee process



Goals:

Walk through key elements and requirements of the Connect Illinois Round 4 subgrantee selection process:

- Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
- Application process and tools
- Application templates
- Other tips and tricks

Clarify specific components of the BEAD and Connect Illinois Round 4 program requirements ahead of the subgrantee process

Topics for Discussion Today

1

Recap of BEAD and progress to date

2

Overview of Connect Illinois Round 4 NOFO

1

Recap of BEAD and progress to date

BEAD is a \$42B federal grant program that aims to bring high-speed internet to all Americans

\$42.45 billion

Funds provided for BEAD

The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program is a federal grant program that aims to get all Americans online by funding partnerships between states or territories, communities, and stakeholders to build infrastructure where high-speed internet is currently unavailable

Program highlights

Eligible entities

- All 50 States, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico
- Other Territories: U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

Example eligible uses of funds

- Planning for the deployment of high-speed Internet, including conducting research, collecting data, outreach, and training
- Deploying or upgrading Internet in un/underserved areas
- Improving service to community anchor institutions
- Installing Internet and Wi-Fi in multi-unit residential buildings
- Workforce development, including Registered Apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, community college and/or vocational training for broadband-related occupations to support deployment, maintenance, and upgrades

What are the goals of BEAD?



The BEAD Program awarded Illinois \$1.04 billion to connect all unserved and underserved locations to broadband over the next 5 years



Ensure universal coverage across all un/underserved locations in the state, maximizing deployment of end-to-end fiber, and only using non-fiber where fiber costs are extremely high¹



Prioritize projects providing broadband access to unserved and underserved locations and community anchor institutions, Wi-Fi equipment for Multi-Dwelling Units (MDUs) then other digital equity and inclusion priorities²



Run subgrantee selection process within one year of approval of the Initial Proposal, and complete implementation within four years of receipt of funds³



Focus on improving broadband affordability through a low-cost broadband service option, and a middle-class affordability plan⁴

1. Page 14 of BEAD NOFO, on the definition of Priority Broadband Project
2. Page 33 of BEAD NOFO, on the allocation of grant funds
3. Page 65 of BEAD NOFO, on deployment deadlines and benchmarks
4. Page 42-46 of BEAD NOFO, on inclusion of affordability in the BEAD scoring criteria

Source: [BEAD NOFO](#)

Overview of the BEAD-Funded Connect Illinois Round 4 timeline

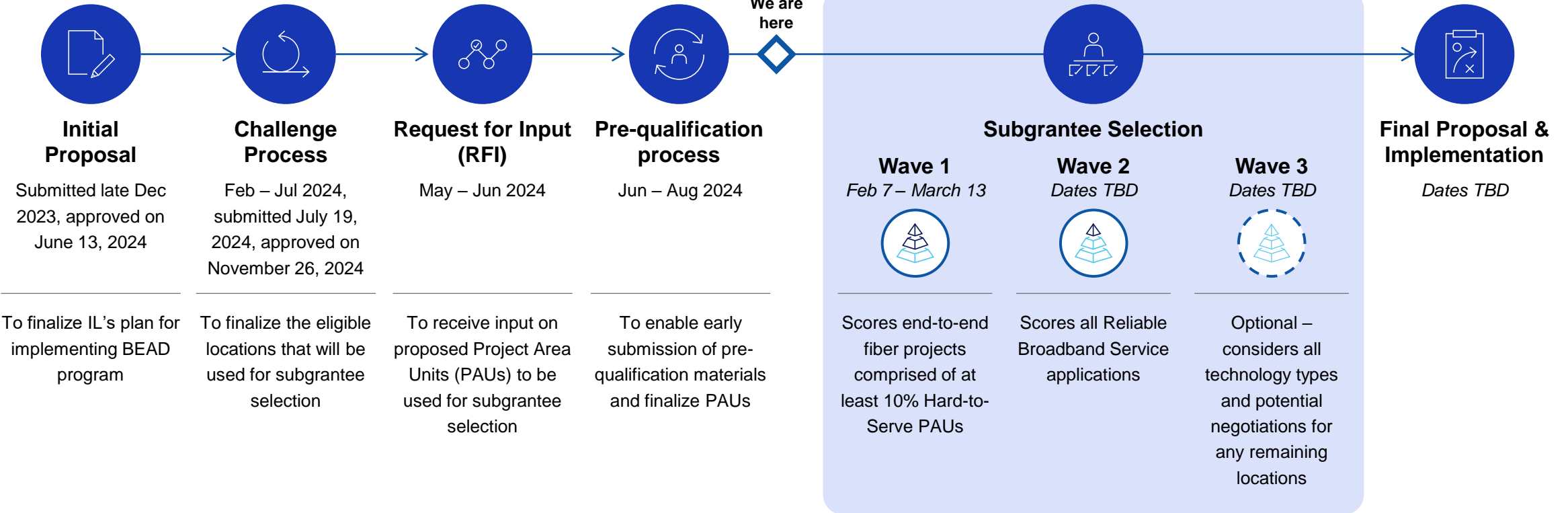
PRELIMINARY TIMELINE - SUBJECT TO CHANGE

INFORMATION PROVIDED ON AN INFORMATIONAL BASIS AND DOES NOT SUPERCEDE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS

Key Updates

- Pre-Qualification Participation Notice Letters sent to all participants
- Final BEAD eligibility data approved by NTIA
- Draft NOFO posted for initial review

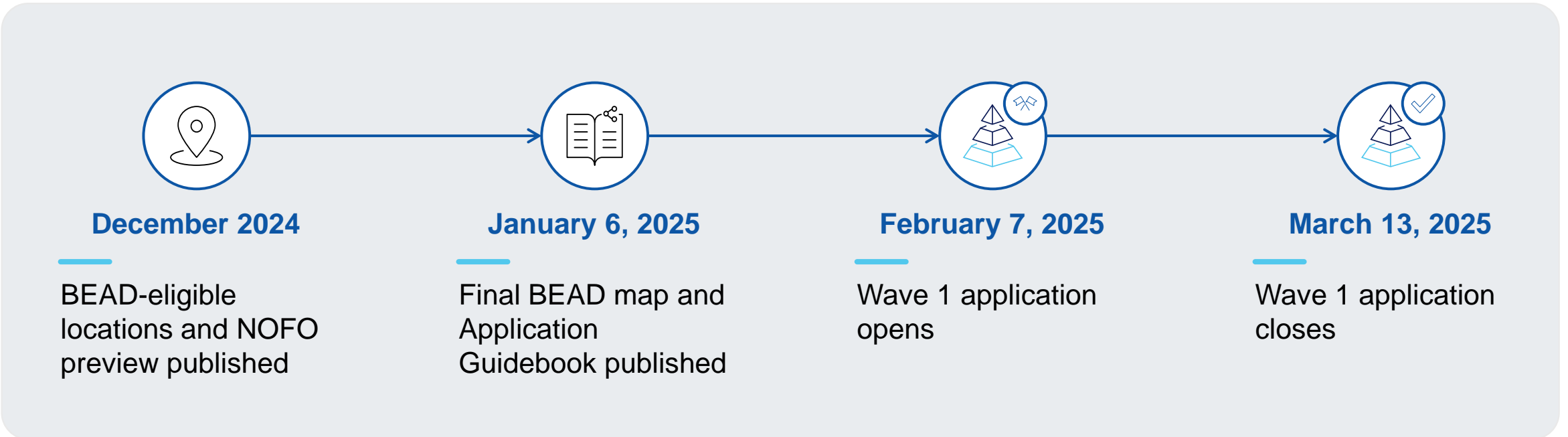
We are here



Key dates for BEAD-Funded Connect Illinois Round 4

PRELIMINARY TIMELINE - SUBJECT TO CHANGE

INFORMATION PROVIDED ON AN INFORMATIONAL BASIS AND DOES NOT SUPERCEDE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS



Technical Assistance:

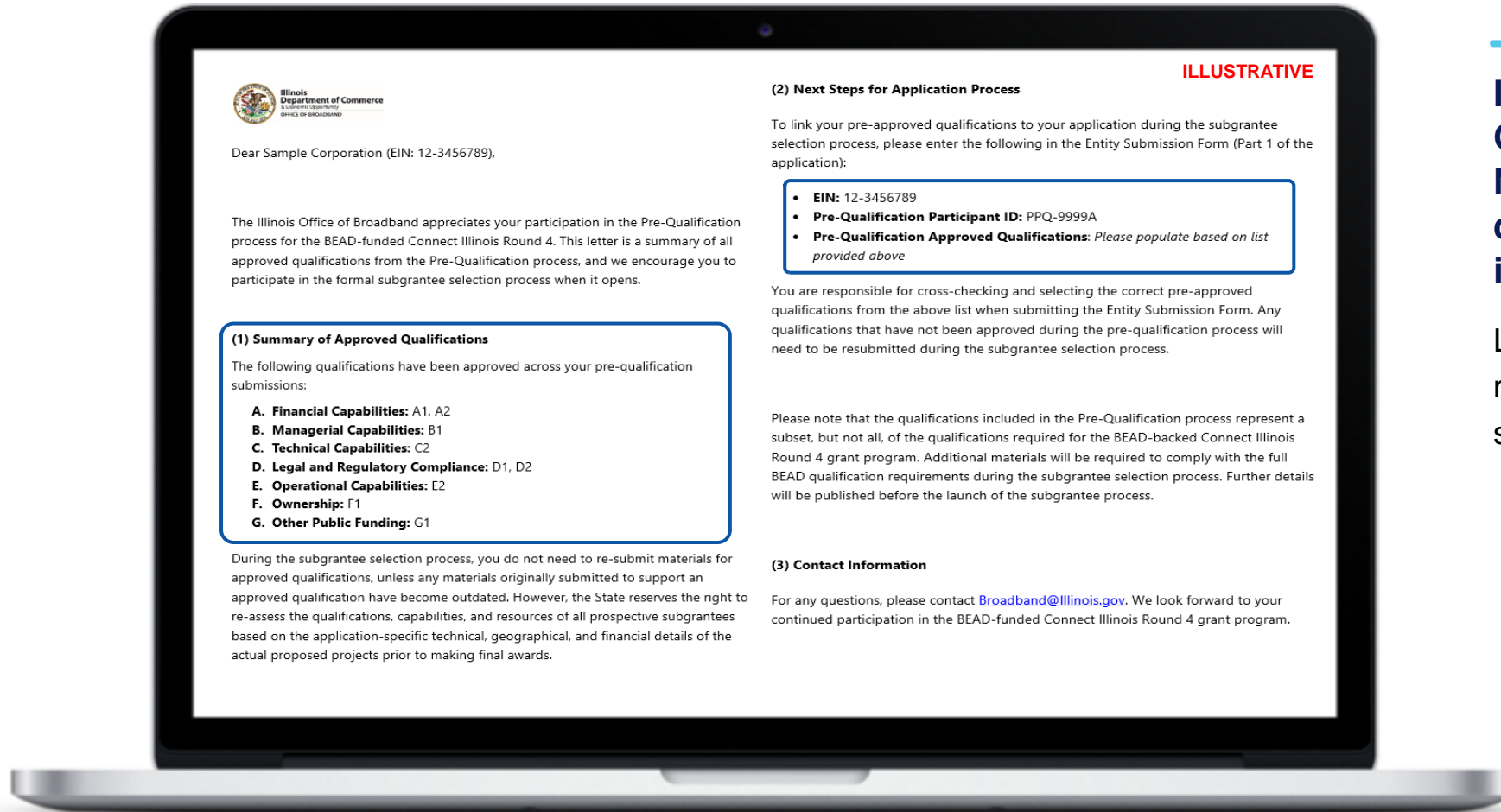
- Application materials walk-throughs during webinars throughout January
- Recurring office hours and technical assistance will be offered during application window

Sample Pre-Qualification Participation Notice Letter

ILLUSTRATIVE

INFORMATION PROVIDED ON AN INFORMATIONAL BASIS AND DOES NOT SUPERCEDE ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS

Key information

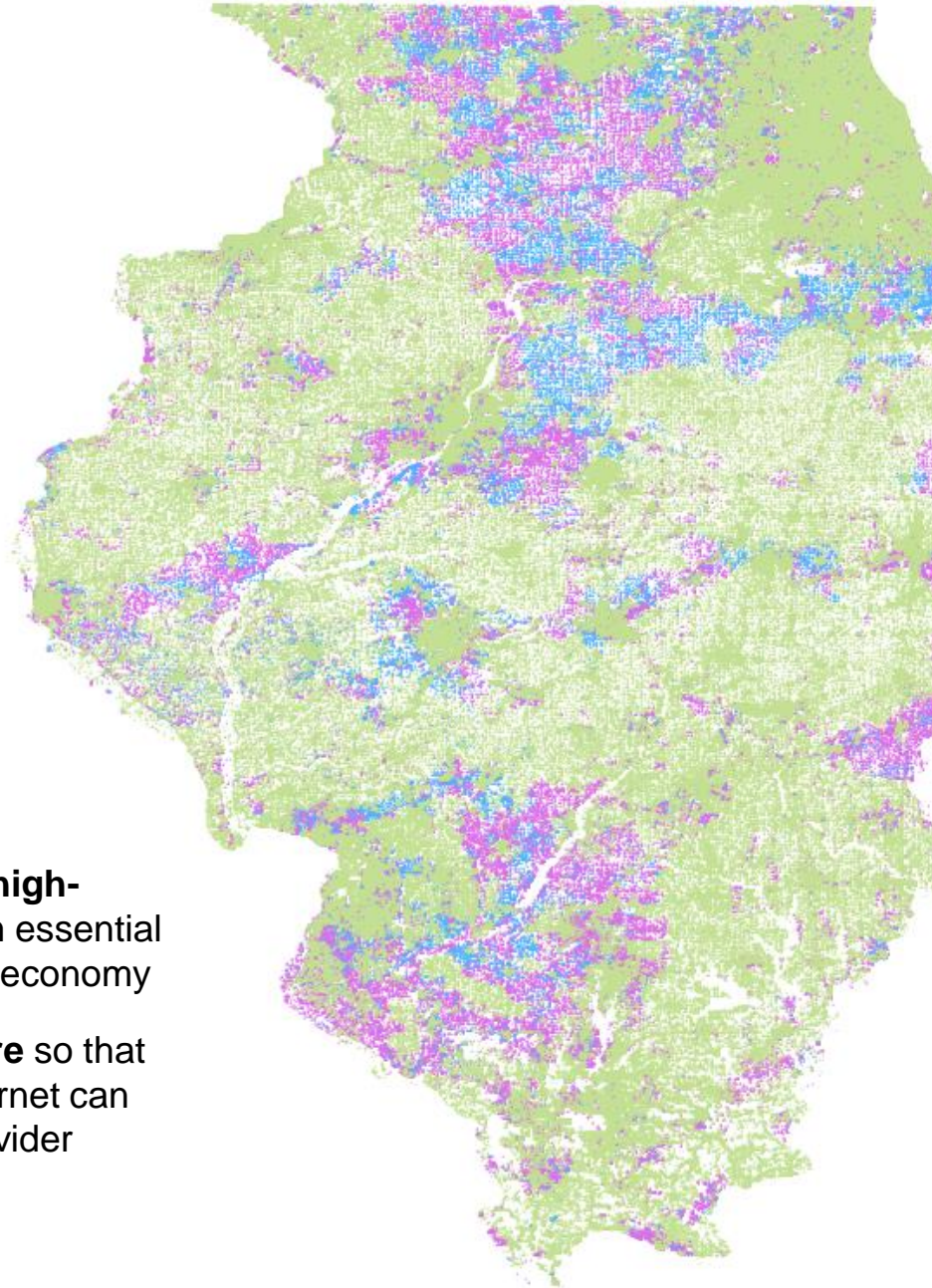


IOB sent a Pre-Qualification Participation Notice Letter to all pre-qualification participants in Fall 2024

Letter summarizes qualifying materials for reference during sub-grantee selection process.

Note: RDOF awardees are required to resubmit materials for G4 even if pre-qualified (see Final Determination email for details)

175,293 locations are eligible to be connected through BEAD



Today, many Illinoisans cannot access high-speed internet service, barring them from essential online services and the 21st century digital economy

BEAD funds will help build infrastructure so that every Illinoisan who wants high-speed internet can subscribe to internet service through a provider

Broadband service availability in Illinois, per BEAD-eligibility data

~4.2M

Total Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs)

~107K (~3%)

Unserved BSLs

(locations with <25/3Mbps speed)

~65K (~1%)

Underserved BSLs

(locations with ≥25/3Mbps and <100/20Mbps speed)

~4.0M (~96%)

Served BSLs

(locations with ≥100/20Mbps speed)

Plus **3,356** eligible community anchor institutions (CAIs)

BEAD-eligible

2

Connect Illinois Round 4 NOFO Overview

Overview of the BEAD-Funded Connect Illinois Round 4 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)



What is the Connect Illinois Round 4 NOFO?

The Connect Illinois Round 4 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is a **comprehensive document** detailing:

- Federal and state application and program requirements for the BEAD Funded Connect Illinois Round 4
- Necessary steps to qualify and apply for Illinois BEAD funding
- The subgrantee selection process and post-selection subgrantee obligations for Connect Illinois Round 4

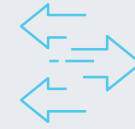


Who is the intended audience?

The Connect Illinois Round 4 NOFO is **relevant to all parties interested in applying for Connect Illinois Round 4 funding awards.**

As detailed in the NOFO, **entities that can deploy broadband are eligible to apply**, including but not limited to:

- Incorporated businesses or partnerships
- Local governments
- Nonprofit organizations
- Cooperative associations



Does the Connect Illinois Round 4 NOFO differ from the BEAD NOFO?

The BEAD NOFO details the **overall federal BEAD program, which funds are used for Connect Illinois Round 4.**

The Connect Illinois Round 4 NOFO introduces **program details specific to the State of Illinois** while adopting BEAD requirements as the grantee of the federal BEAD program.

BEAD-Funded Connect Illinois Round 4 Notice of Funding Opportunity

NOFO draft for educational purposes. Subject to change prior to final NOFO and opening of application process.

Agency-specific Content for the Notice of Funding Opportunity Connect Illinois Broadband Program NOFO ID: 3504-2942

For information about grants please visit <https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/granteeresources.html>.

A. Program Description

Notice of Funding Opportunity Intent

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (the “State” or “DCEO”) is issuing this Notice of Funding Opportunity (“NOFO”) to set forth the requirements for the BEAD-Funded Connect Illinois Round 4.

Program Description

BEAD-Funded Connect Illinois Round 4 utilizes federal funds from the U.S. Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program, which was authorized by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, Division F, Title I, Section 60102, Public Law 117-58, 135 Stat. 429 (November 15, 2021) (Infrastructure Act or Act), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

BEAD-Funded Connect Illinois Round 4 deploys broadband service to unserved and underserved locations. In accordance with the BEAD Program, this program prioritizes projects that provide fiber connectivity directly to the end-user while considering projects that use other technologies to ensure universal coverage.¹

The Connect Illinois Round 4 NOFO has seven sections to guide prospective applicants through the application and selection process

A. Program Description

Introduction to Connect Illinois and key terms relevant to the program

B. Funding Information

Overview of eligible and ineligible award costs, as well as fixed-amount subawards

C. Eligibility Information

Detailed guidance on federal, state, and program-specific eligibility requirements, including match and low-cost plan requirements

D. Application and Submission Information

Summary of necessary forms to submit to apply for Connect Illinois Round 4

E. Application Review Information

Explanation of scoring criteria, subgrantee selection, and review process

F. Award Administration Information

Description of State award notices, administrative and policy requirements, and detailed reporting requirements

G. State Awarding Agency Contact(s)

Contact information for the Grant Help Desk

Deep dive to follow on each section ►

A. Program Description introduces **Connect Illinois Round 4**, and provides key definitions, program history, and performance metrics

“The primary goal of the Program is to make progress toward achieving universal broadband access statewide and digital equity by 2030”

Sub-sections in Section A. Program Description



NOFO Intent



Program Description



Program History



Performance Goals and Measures

What prospective applicants can expect in Section A:

- A brief description of the history and objectives of the Connect Illinois grant program
- List of key terms used throughout document and their definitions
- High-level summary of performance goals and measures of Connect Illinois Round 4

B. Funding Information delineates eligible and ineligible project costs, as well as details on fixed-amount subawards

What prospective applicants can expect in Section B:



Eligible costs

- **Overview of eligible costs** for BEAD-funded last-mile deployment projects
- Details on eligible **pre-award expenses and closeout costs**
- Information on **eligible costs for locations that are not unserved / underserved**



Ineligible costs

Breakdown of **key ineligible costs**, including:

- **Use of grant funds for covered communications equipment or services** under the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act
- **Profit, fee, or other incremental charge** above the actual cost incurred
- Use of grant funds to support or oppose **collective bargaining**
- **Indirect costs**



Additional information regarding award execution & grant agreements

- **Description of fixed-amount subawards** and payment approach based on State-defined milestones
- **Information on specific reimbursement requirements** pertaining to those leveraging the NTIA Letter of Credit waiver

Deep dive available on 08/13 Webinar

C. Eligibility Information guides applicants through State GATA requirements and BEAD-required qualifications

What prospective applicants can expect in Section C. Eligibility Information:

10/09 Webinar describes State of Illinois GATA qualification requirements



0

GATA Registration requirements

See introduction paragraph for details

1

Eligibility requirements for applicants

See sub-section 1 (Eligible Applicants) for eligible participants and qualifications, including details for consortia

2

Match requirements

See sub-section 2 (Cost Sharing or Matching) for match requirements, including qualifying in-kind contributions and match funds from other federal programs

3

Indirect costs specified as ineligible

See sub-section 3 (Indirect Costs) for details

4

FOIA requirements and instructions on how to mark confidential information

See sub-section 4 (FOIA/Confidential Information) for details

5

Low-cost broadband service requirement and other BEAD-specific requirements

See sub-section 5 (Other, if applicable) for details

09/04 Webinar highlights BEAD match and low-cost service plan requirements



Updated Low-Cost Service Option info can be found in the NOFO

Deep Dive:

Low-Cost Broadband Service Option Update



Key updates to low-cost option

- Allowance for annual inflation adjustment aligned to **Producer Price Index**
- Maximum monthly cost for **tribal lands updated from \$75 to \$30**
- Consideration for **monthly price waiver** if:
 - Proposed price modification **does not exceed \$40 per month**
 - Waiver includes evidence that modification would support **sustainable business case**
- Waiver evaluation factors include **project area density, broadband adoption rates, cost structure, and number of eligible households**

Pending NTIA approval as of Dec. 11, 2024



Rationale for updates




- **Balance of affordability and provider participation** to achieve BEAD's **100% connectivity mandate**
 - Provider feedback about sustainability considerations for remote, low-density areas
 - Waivers for up to \$40 will support mission of **network sustainability while balancing affordability principles**
 - Informed by feedback through statewide digital equity survey captured in State Digital Equity Plan

D. Application and Submission Information includes details on application forms required for Connect Illinois Round 4

Sub-sections in Section D

1. Address to Request Application Package
2. **Content and Form of Application Submission**
3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM)
4. Submission Dates and Times
5. Intergovernmental Review, if applicable
6. Funding Restrictions
7. Other Submission Requirements

Overview of Connect Illinois Round 4 application forms

| |  Entity Submission Form |  Project Submission Form |  Application Submission Form |
|-----------------------------|--|--|---|
| Purpose | Ensures entities applying for Connect Illinois Round 4 meet NTIA BEAD qualification requirements | Ensures submitted projects meet NTIA BEAD qualification requirements and collects materials to be reviewed during the Merit Review Scoring Process | Serves as the official submission of the application to the State of Illinois, specifying the Entity & Project submissions to be reviewed by the State |
| Submission frequency | Once per entity , regardless of number of projects to be submitted | Once per project | Once per project |

Details to be provided in Application Guidebook

E. Application Review Information outlines scoring criteria and details on the application review and selection process

What prospective applicants can expect in Section E. Application Review Information:

08/28 Webinar includes detailed walkthrough of scoring criteria

AS OF AUGUST 26, 2024

Overview: BEAD-backed Connect Illinois Round 4 scoring rubric

| Criteria | How it will be applied | Score, % |
|---|--|-------------------|
| Primary¹ | | |
| Minimal BEAD Program outlay: non-state match | More points will be assigned to the degree of nonstate match over 30%, as a greater nonstate match signifies more "skin in the game" and therefore financial risk assumed by the applicant | 20% |
| Minimal BEAD Program outlay: financial need with respect to reference cost | Points will be assigned based on how much the application's required BEAD outlay deviates from the reference cost published by the state. More points will be assigned to applications with lower BEAD outlay compared to reference cost | 30% |
| Affordability | Applicants will be scored based on the price they offer for either 10Gbps/10Gbps or 100Gbps/100Gbps for Priority Broadband Projects and 10Gbps/10Gbps for other broadband projects | 15% |
| Fair Labor Practices | Applicants will be scored based on their demonstrated record of and plans to be in compliance with federal labor and employment laws, and submission of a project labor agreement | 15% |
| | | 80% |
| Secondary / Additional² | | |
| Speed to deployment | Points will be assigned for enforceable deployment plans faster than 48 months | 3% |
| Speed of Network & Technical Capabilities | Points will be assigned based on performance levels and scalability of networks | 4% |
| Open Access | Points will be assigned based on subgrantee's provision of open access | 3% |
| Local Coordination | Points will be assigned based on the breadth and depth of community support for the project (5%) and financial investment by community members and organizations (5%) | 10% |
| | | 20% |
| | | Total 100% |

1. BEAD projects where the total collected in equity is less than 70% of total project cost. 2. BEAD projects where the total collected in equity is 70% or more of total project cost.

Source: Connect Illinois Round 4 NOFO as of December 11, 2024; 08/28 BEAD Webinar

1

Walkthrough of awardee selection criteria, including prioritization and scoring criteria

See sub-section 1 (Criteria) for details on BEAD-defined prioritization approach, scoring criteria and associated weights, and other considerations for applications

2

Introduction to the three-wave subgrantee selection process and final review process

See sub-section 2 (Review and Selection Process) for a step-by-step walkthrough of the three-wave process, eligible project and technology type by Wave, and details on the final review process for all preliminarily selected applications

3

Details on expectations for successful applicants and the Notice of State Award

See sub-section 3 (Anticipated Announcement and State Award Dates, if applicable) for details

10/16 Webinar describes subgrantee selection and final review processes

Each wave has a series of key steps to determine preliminary selections, and a final review will occur after the completion of the last wave



Application Guidebook to provide further details on scoring and subgrantee selection

F. Award Administration Information outlines key administrative, national policy, and reporting requirements for awardees

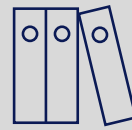
Key takeaways from Section F. Award Administrative Information



1 State Award Notices

Notices of State Awards (NOSAs) will specify funding terms and specific award conditions

NOSAs must be accepted in the GATA Portal and are not an authorization to begin performance or incur costs



2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Connect Illinois Round 4 awardees are responsible for adhering to a variety of **federal and Illinois-specific policy requirements**

Details available on next page



3 Reporting

Awardees must submit quarterly **Periodic Performance Reports** and **Periodic Financial Reports**, and comply with **monitoring, auditing, and project reporting** requirements per Connect Illinois Round 4 NOFO guidelines

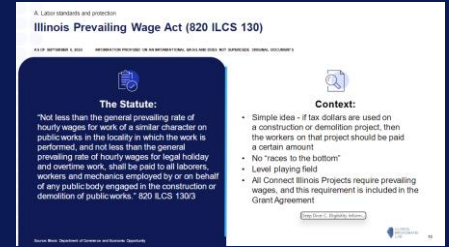
F. Award Administration Information: Summary of administrative & national obligations

Administrative / national policy requirements listed in Section F of the NOFO:

- Subrecipients and Subcontractors
- Grant Uniform Requirements
- Procurement
- Environmental Review Requirements
- A** Illinois Works Jobs Program Act (30 ILCS 559/20-1 *et seq.*)
- A** Prevailing Wage Act (820 ILCS 130/0.01 *et seq.*)
- Employment of Illinois Workers on Public Works Act (30 ILCS 570/0.01 *et seq.*)
- General Compliance Requirements and Prioritization
- B** BEAD Subgrantee Obligations:
 - Network capabilities
 - Deployment Requirements
 - Service Obligations
- C** Environmental and National Historical Preservation Requirements
- Civil Rights and Nondiscrimination law Compliance
- Climate Resilience
- Property Trust Relationship and Public Notice Filings for Grant-acquired Property
- B** Domestic Preference for Procurements (“Buy American”)
- A** Contracting with Small and Minority Businesses, Women’s Business Enterprises, and Labor-Surplus-Area Firms
- A** Project Labor Agreements

Relevant webinars:

- A** **09/11 Webinar explains Illinois-specific workforce and labor requirements**



- B** **09/18 Webinar describes subgrantee obligations and BABA guidelines**



- C** **09/25 Webinar walks through NTIA NEPA requirements**



G. State Awarding Agency Contact(s) includes contact information for the Grant Help Desk

Grant Help Desk

Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

Email: CEO.GrantHelp@illinois.gov

Illinois Office of Broadband

Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

Email: Broadband@illinois.gov

For additional guidance, applicants can reach out to:

- **Grant Help Desk:** for information on GATA pre-qualification steps
- **Illinois Office of Broadband (IOB):** for grants processing questions

Additional Resources & Helpful Links

Connect Illinois Round 4 NOFO Preview: [\[Link\]](#)

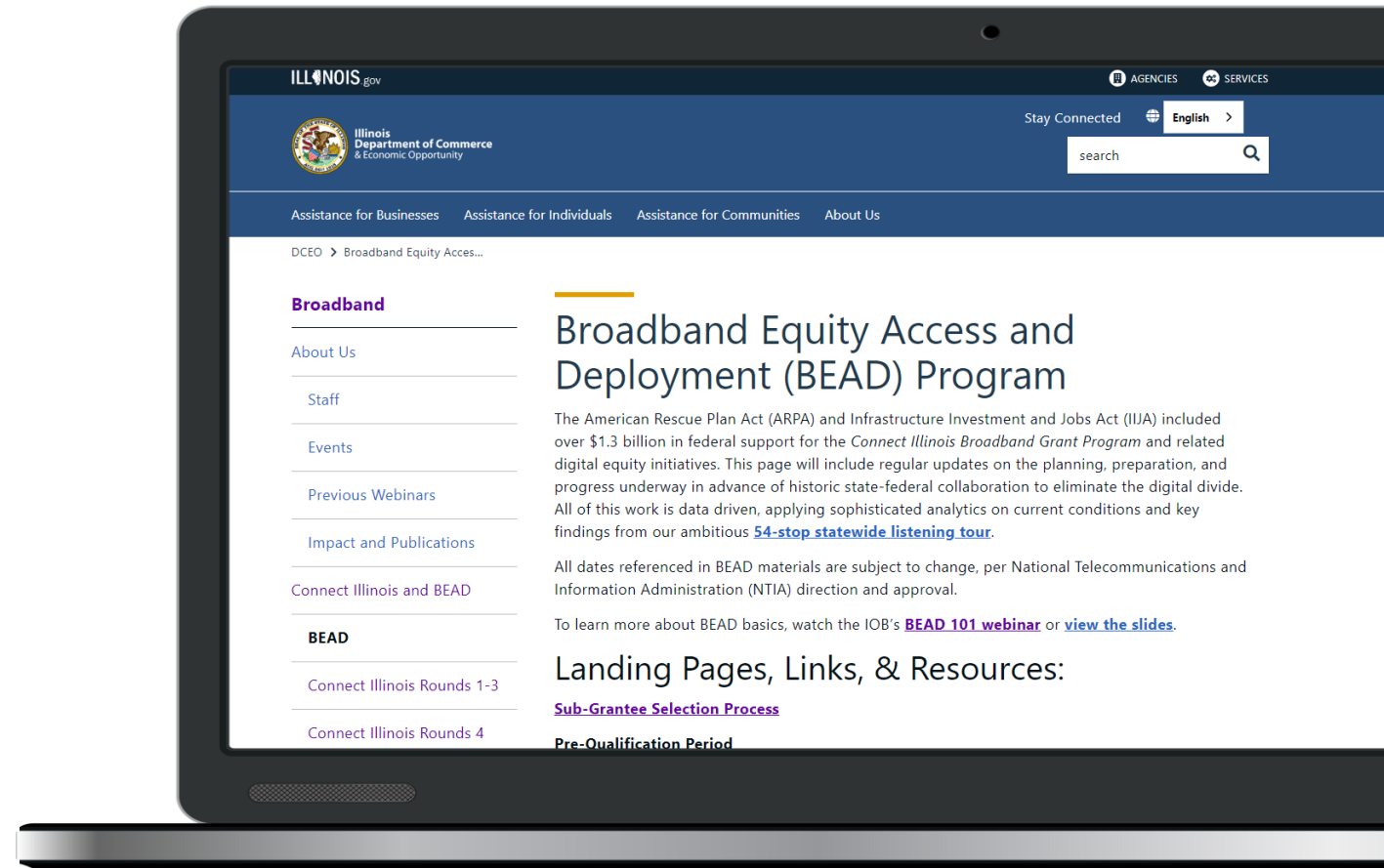
State of Illinois, BEAD Landing Page: [\[Link\]](#)

State of Illinois BEAD Subgrantee Selection Process Page: [\[Link\]](#)

- Includes materials from BEAD Deep Dive Webinar Series and FAQs

Connect Illinois Initial Proposal, Volume II: [\[Link\]](#)

NTIA BEAD NOFO: [\[Link\]](#)





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