

What Good Looks Like-Business Enterprise Program (BEP) Documents

Version 1, as of September 2026

Purpose of ‘What Good Looks Like’ Guides: This guide is intended to assist grantees in understanding document requirements and preparing complete, review-ready submissions. It includes practical considerations and illustrative examples of the submission.

Note: What Good Looks Like Guides do not replace Illinois Office of Broadband (IOB) guidance documents, templates or other formal program requirements; grantees may use these guides as practical aids alongside the formal requirements.

About the Business Enterprise Program (BEP): The State of Illinois Business Enterprise Program (BEP) is designed to foster an inclusive, equitable and competitive business environment and support underrepresented businesses to increase their capacity, grow revenue and enhance their credentials as businesses owned by minorities, women, and persons with disabilities. Grantees receiving funds through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program will be required to meet BEP participation goals set by the IOB. Guidance documents and templates for this submission are available on [IOB’s BEAD Grantee Resource Hub](#).

This document contains:

- [Conditional Approval Request Letter Acceptance Criteria](#)
- [BEP Utilization Plan Acceptance Criteria](#)
- [Lien Waivers Acceptance Criteria](#)
- [Best Practices/Tips](#)
- [Common Mistakes](#)
- [Examples](#)

Conditional Approval Request Letter Acceptance Criteria

In the BEP Conditional Approval Request Letter, the grantee acknowledges their understanding of BEP requirements and intent to comply with the program’s requirements. This letter must comply with the [Business Enterprise Program Guidance Document](#) and include the following:

- Fully populated IOB-required [template](#) (where all highlighted fields are filled in)
- Grantee letterhead (including grantee name, address, contact information and logo)
- Date
- Grant number (if this number has been issued by the IOB)
- Signature of the Authorized Signatory/Designee, along with a printed name



Characteristics of an acceptable document:

- Pre-populated template language is unaltered
- All required fields are populated
- Provided as a PDF

BEP Utilization Plan Acceptance Criteria

The BEP Utilization Plan documents the grantee's understanding of the requirements of the BEP Act and specifies the vendors that the grantee intends to utilize to complete the participation requirement. The BEP Utilization Plan must comply with the [Business Enterprise Program Guidance Document](#) and include the following:

- Grantee affirmation of submission of the Utilization Plan in accordance with the requirements of the [BEP Act](#)
- Grantee affirmation of inclusion of the following language in each contract with vendors included in the Utilization Plan:
 - "We shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sexual orientation or sex in the performance of this plan."
- Name, title, telephone number, and e-mail address of the individual within the grantee's organization who will be responsible for BEP compliance, such as a grant or project manager
- Inclusion of one of the following statements:
 - "We attach Section I to demonstrate that our Plan fully meets the BEP utilization goal of XXX% through subcontracting."
 - "We attest our Utilization Plan does not fully meet the BEP utilization goal. We request the DCEO Good Faith Effort documentation guidelines and will submit all required forms and supporting documents requested by DCEO and the Commission on Equity and Inclusion (CEI) Good Faith Efforts Committees."
- Signature of the Authorized Signatory/Designee, along with a printed name and date
- Section 1 completed

Characteristics of an acceptable document:

- BEP vendor(s) must be listed in the document, but do not need to have been utilized or be under contract at the time of Utilization Plan submission or approval
- BEP vendors are listed in the [CEI directory](#) as of the date the BEP Utilization Plan is submitted to the Illinois Office of Broadband
- Document contains signature of the grantee's Authorized Signatory/Designee (BEP vendors are not required to sign the BEP Utilization Plan)

Lien Waivers Acceptance Criteria

Lien waivers, for the purposes of complying with the BEP Act, are used to verify the BEP-certified vendor has received payment in exchange for goods or services provided on the project. The lien waivers must comply with the [Business Enterprise Program Guidance Document](#) and include the following:

- Acknowledgement by the BEP-certified vendor of release of liens or claims of ownership by the vendor for the type of goods/services provided through the contract and locations the goods/services were provided
- Dollar amount of payments received for vendor's goods/services
- Statement by the BEP vendor waiving and/or releasing all claims against the grantee (or subcontracted party, if applicable) for the goods/services in the dollar amount stated above
- Wet signature (physically handwritten signature with ink) of an authorized representative of the BEP vendor
- Contractors affidavit portion filled out, including:
 - Authorized representative name
 - Position in the organization
 - Organization name
 - Project location
 - Grantee or the contractor/subcontractor employed by the grantee
 - Total amount of the contract
 - Amount of funds received for the work provided
- Populated table which:
 - Specifies total labor and material used to complete the project.
 - Lists all vendors and subcontractors used by the BEP-certified vendor to complete their contracted portion of the project, including the BEP-certified vendor themselves.
- Date
- Contractor affidavit portion signed (using a wet signature) by an authorized representative of the BEP-certified vendor
- Notarization

Characteristics of an acceptable document:

- The BEP-certified vendor listed in the BEP Utilization Plan or subsequent vendor change forms has filled out and signed the lien waiver
- Subcontractors/vendors to the BEP-certified vendor who are also listed in the BEP Utilization Plan receive funding completed their own lien waiver(s)
- All signatures are wet signatures

Best Practices/Tips

Considerations for grantees to help prepare complete, review-ready submissions and maintain appropriate supporting documentation:

- Identify potential vendors early in the project
- Remember that BEP utilization can be achieved through consultants, suppliers, or subcontractors -- any business involved in the project receiving grant dollars can qualify and help a grantee make progress toward their goal
- During vendor/contractor selection, include BEP requirements in Requests for Proposal (RFP), bid solicitations, advertisements, and any other methods used in the procurement process
- If grantees deem that a waiver of the BEP goal is necessary, grantees must show documentation of good faith efforts toward achieving the goal. Document all BEP efforts thoroughly from the start of the process. Further instructions for good faith efforts documentation can be found in the [BEP Guidance Document](#)

Common Mistakes

Some examples of typical mistakes that lead to rework, delayed acceptance, or other issues:

- The “Good Faith Efforts” waiver process for BEP goals involves a high level of effort and determination on the grantee toward achieving the participation goal. The IOB places high scrutiny on the use of waivers, as the expectation is that the grantee achieves the participation goal set at the start of the project
- Vendors selected to meet the goal must be part of the CEI Directory at the time of Utilization Plan submission

Examples

The document below illustrates what a complete conditional approval request letter may look like. Required information is highlighted in yellow



GENERIC BROADBAND SOLUTIONS
Connecting Homes. Empowering Businesses.

123 Connectivity Avenue
Chicago, IL 60601
Phone: (800) 555-0123
Email: support@genericbroadband.com
Website: www.genericbroadband.com

August 14, 2026

Tim Laffey
Illinois Office of Broadband
1011 South 2nd Street
Springfield, IL 62704

RE: DCEO GRANT #XX-XXXXXX

Dear Mr. Laffey:

This letter is to request conditional approval of our Business Enterprise Program (BEP) utilization plan for the purpose of furthering our grant agreement execution process. We will provide the actual BEP utilization plan once vendors are selected to be contracted, which we anticipate at a later date.

As the Grantee, we understand the grant requirements and will comply with such conditions. We will make sure that when we advertise this project bidders are aware of the BEP goal requirements and that failure to meet goals may result in rejection of the bid. We understand that it is our responsibility to ensure the selected bidder/s meet the goals and that goals established for this project may be satisfied through utilization of consultants, suppliers, or subcontractors.

Sincerely,

George Costanza

Authorized Signatory/Designee

George Costanza, President and CEO

The document below illustrates what a complete BEP Utilization Plan may look like. Required information is highlighted in yellow.

DCEO Project # XX-XXXXXX

DCEO BEP UTILIZATION PLAN

Minority, Female, Persons with Disability Status and Subcontracting

The Business Enterprise for Minorities, Women, and Persons with Disabilities Act (30 ILCS 575/0.01 *et seq.*) (“BEP Act”) establishes a goal for contracting with businesses that have been certified as Minority-owned Business Enterprises (MBE), Women-owned Business Enterprises (WBE), Women/Minority Business Enterprise (WMBE) and Persons with disabilities-owned Business Enterprises (PBE) (“BEP vendors” collectively).

Goal to be achieved by the Grantee: This utilization plan includes a total Business Enterprise Program (“BEP”) utilization goal of 10 %. The goal was based on the availability of certified vendors to perform the anticipated direct subcontracting opportunities of this plan.

Grantee Assurance: The Grantee shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sexual orientation or sex in the performance of this plan. Failure by the Grantee to carry out these requirements is a material breach of this plan, which may result in the termination of the Grant Agreement or such other remedy, as the Agency/ Grantor deems appropriate. This assurance must be included in each contract that the Grantee signs with a contractor, subcontractor or supplier.

Calculating Certified Vendor Participation: The Utilization Plan should include the work anticipated to be performed by all certified vendors and paid for upon satisfactory completion. Only the value of payments made for the work actually performed by certified vendors is counted toward the plan goal. Counting guidelines are summarized below:

- 1) The value of the work actually performed by the certified vendor shall be counted towards the goal. The entire amount of that portion of the Grant Agreement that is performed by the certified vendors, including supplies purchased or equipment leased by the certified vendor shall be counted, except supplies purchased and equipment rented from the Grantee.
- 2) A joint venture shall count the portion of the total dollar value of the Grant Agreement equal to the distinct, clearly defined portion of the work of the Grant Agreement that the certified vendor performs with its forces toward the goal. A joint venture shall also count the dollar value of work subcontracted to other certified vendors. Work performed by the forces of a non-certified joint venture partner shall not be counted toward the goal.
- 3) When a certified vendor subcontracts part of the work to another firm, the value of the subcontracted work shall be counted toward the Grant Agreement goal only if the certified vendor’s subcontractor is a certified vendor. Work that a certified vendor subcontracts to a non-certified vendor will not count towards the goal.

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- 4) A Grantee shall count towards the goal 100% of its expenditures for materials and supplies required under the Grant Agreement and obtained from a certified vendor manufacturer, regular dealer or supplier.
- 5) A Grantee shall count towards the goal the following expenditures to certified vendors that are not manufacturers, regular dealers or suppliers:
 - a. The fees or commissions charged for providing a bona fide service, such as professional, technical, consultant or managerial services and assistance in the procurement of essential personnel, facilities, equipment, materials or supplies required for performance of the Grant Agreement, provided that the fee or commission is determined by the Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity ("DCEO") to be reasonable and not excessive as compared with fees customarily allowed for similar services.
 - b. The fees charged for delivery of materials and supplies required by the Grant Agreement (but not the cost of the materials and supplies themselves) when the hauler, trucker, or delivery service is not also the manufacturer of or a regular dealer in the materials and supplies, provided that the fee is determined by DCEO to be reasonable and not excessive as compared with fees customarily allowed for similar services. The certified vendor trucking firm must be responsible for the management and supervision of the entire trucking operation for which it is responsible and must itself own and operate at least one fully licensed, insured and operational truck used on the project.
 - c. The fees or commissions charged for providing any bonds or insurance specifically required for the performance on the project, provided that the fee or commission is determined by DCEO to be reasonable and not excessive as compared with fees customarily allowed for similar services.
- 6) A Grantee shall count towards the goal only expenditures to firms that perform a commercially useful function in the work of the Grant Agreement.
 - a. A firm is considered to perform a commercially useful function when it is responsible for the execution of a distinct element of the work on the project and carries out its responsibilities by actually performing, managing, and supervising the work involved. The certified vendor must also be responsible, with respect to materials or supplies used on the project, for negotiating price, determining quality and quantity, ordering the materials or supplies, and installing the materials (where applicable) and paying for the materials or supplies. To determine whether a firm is performing a commercially useful function, DCEO shall evaluate the amount of work subcontracted, whether the amount the firm is to be paid under this plan is commensurate with the work it is actually performing and the credit claimed for its performance of the work, industry practices and other relevant factors.
 - b. A certified vendor does not perform a commercially useful function if its role is limited to that of an extra participant in a transaction through which funds are passed in order to obtain certified vendor participation. In determining whether a certified vendor is such an extra participant, DCEO shall examine similar transactions, particularly those in which the certified vendors do not participate, and industry practices.
- 7) A Grantee shall not count towards the goal expenditures that are not direct, necessary and proximately related to the work of this plan. Only the amount of services or goods that are directly attributable to the performance of the scope of work shall be counted. Ineligible expenditures include general office overhead or other Grantee support activities.

Generic Broadband Solutions (the Grantee) submits the following Utilization Plan as part of our proposal in accordance with the requirements of the BEP Act. We understand that compliance with the BEP Act is required as part of this plan.

Generic Broadband Solutions (the Grantee) makes the following assurances and agrees to include the assurance in each contract with a contractor, subcontractor or supplier utilized on this plan: we shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sexual orientation or sex in the performance of this plan. Failure to carry out these requirements is a material breach of this plan, which may result in the termination of this plan or such other remedy, as the Agency/ Grantor deems appropriate.

Grantee's person responsible for compliance

Name:	Cosmo Kramer
Title:	Project Manager
Telephone:	800-555-0123
E-mail:	kramer@genericbroadband.com

We submit one (1) of the following statements:

☒ We attach Section I to demonstrate that our Plan fully meets the BEP utilization goal of 10 % through subcontracting.

☐ We attest our Utilization Plan does not fully meet the BEP utilization goal. We request the DCEO Good Faith Effort documentation guidelines and will submit all required forms and supporting documents requested by DCEO and Commission on Equity and Inclusion (CEI) Good Faith Effort Committee.

Grantee Authorized Signature

8/20/26

Date

President and CEO

Grantee Authorized Name and Title

Section I
Utilization of Certified Vendors
(Please submit a separate form for each proposed certified vendor)

To achieve the BEP utilization goal through contracting, the following is proposed:

- 1) The proposed certified vendor's:

Company Name: Vandelay Industries
Address: 129 West 81st Street, Apartment 5A, New York, NY
Phone: 800-555-4444 FEIN # 98-7654321

At the time of submission, the above vendor is:

- ☒ Certified with the Commission on Equity and Inclusion (CEI) as: MBE ☒ WBE ☒ WMBE ☒ PBE ☐
☐ Certified with a certifying entity other than CEI: _____
☐ Meets the criteria and has submitted an application for certification with CEI. Application # _____

- 2) A detailed description of the commercially useful work to be done by this certified vendor is as follows:

Various broadband construction materials used in project

- 3) The total estimated cost to the state for the Grant Agreement is \$ 10,000,000.00. The portion of the Grant Agreement which will be contracted/subcontracted to this certified vendor is \$ 1,000,000.00 or 10 % of the total cost of the Grant Agreement.

- 4) A joint venture agreement is not required, as the arrangement between Generic Broadband Solutions and Vandelay Industries is that of contractor/ sub-contractor and not a joint venture.

- 5) The Grantee has not prohibited or otherwise limited Vandelay Industries (certified vendor) from providing contractor/ sub-contractor quotes to other potential bidders/Grantees.

We understand that DCEO Office of Broadband may require additional information to verify our compliance and we agree to cooperate immediately in submitting to interviews, allowing entry to any of our office locations, providing further documentation, or soliciting the cooperation of our proposed certified vendor. We will maintain appropriate records relating to our utilization of the certified vendor including: invoices, cancelled checks, books of account and time records.

Grantee Authorized Signature

8/19/26

Date

The document below illustrates what a complete BEP lien waiver may look like. Required information is highlighted in yellow.

WAIVER OF LIEN TO DATE

DCEO GRANT# XX-XXXXXX

WHEREAS the undersigned has been employed by Generic Broadband Solutions to furnish broadband construction materials for the premises known as _____ of which Generic Broadband Solutions is the owner. The undersigned, for and in consideration of \$ 1,000,000.00 Dollars, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, do(es) hereby waive and release any and all lien or claim of, or right to, lien, under the statutes of the State of Illinois, relating to mechanics' liens, with respect to and on said above-described premises, and the improvements thereon, and on the material, fixtures, apparatus or machinery furnished, and on the moneys, funds or other considerations due or to become due from the owner, on account of all labor, services, material, fixtures, apparatus or machinery, furnished to this date by the undersigned for the above-described premises.

DATE 8/20/2026 COMPANY NAME Vandelay Industries
ADDRESS 129 West 81st Street, Apartment 5A, New York, NY

SIGNATURE _____

Printed Name & Title Art Vandelay, President

CONTRACTOR'S AFFIDAVIT

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

THE UNDERSIGNED, (NAME) Art Vandelay BEING DULY SWORN, DEPOSES AND SAYS THAT HE OR SHE IS (POSITION) President OF (COMPANY NAME) Vandelay Industries WHO IS THE CONTRACTOR FURNISHING a variety of construction materials WORK

ON THE PROJECT LOCATED AT Hardin County OWNED BY Generic Broadband Solutions

That the total amount of the contract is \$ 1,000,000.00 on which he or she has received payment of \$ 1,000,000.00 prior to this payment. That all waivers are true, correct, and genuine and delivered unconditionally and that there is no claim either legal or equitable to defeat the validity of said waivers. That the following are the names and addresses of all parties who have furnished material or labor, or both, for said work and all parties having contracts or subcontracts for specific portions of said work or for material entering into the construction thereof and the amount due or to become due to each, and that the items mentioned include all labor and material required to complete said work according to plans and specifications:

NAMES AND ADDRESSES	WHAT FOR	CONTRACT PRICE	AMOUNT PAID	THIS PAYMENT	BALANCE DUE
<u>Vandelay Industries</u>	<u>construction materials</u>	<u>\$1,000,000.00</u>	<u>\$1,000,000.00</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
TOTAL LABOR & MATERIAL TO COMPLETE		<u>\$1,000,000.00</u>	<u>\$1,000,000.00</u>		

DATE _____ SIGNATURE _____

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN BEFORE ME THIS _____ DAY OF _____, _____

NOTARY PUBLIC