California Public Utilities Commission Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD)

Subgrantee Selection Process Frequently Asked Questions

March 21, 2025
Version 4.0

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) is committed to ensuring a fair, open, and competitive Subgrantee Selection Process for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program. To promote transparency and provide equal access to information, the CPUC has developed this Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) to address inquiries from potential applicants and stakeholders.

The CPUC requests that all questions regarding the BEAD Subgrantee Selection Process be submitted in writing to BEADgrant@cpuc.ca.gov. All questions received will be answered in writing.

This FAQ consolidates questions received through BEAD outreach channels, and along with the CPUC's responses, ensures all interested parties have access to this information. This document is intended to complement and clarify the information outlined in the BEAD Grant Application materials, California's approved Initial Proposal Volume II (IPv2), National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), and Decision Approving Volume Two of the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program Rules. **It does not alter or override** the provisions of the approved IPv2, NOFO, or Decision Approving Volume Two of the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program Rules. If there are discrepancies between answers in this document and responses given through BEAD outreach channels, **the answers in this document should be considered the official reference**.

The CPUC will continue to update this FAQ throughout the Subgrantee Selection Process to address additional questions as they arise, ensuring clarity and transparency through the BEAD program rollout.

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Program Overview and Key Definitions

#	Questions	Answers	Date/Version
1.	Could you provide an overview of the BEAD program?	A comprehensive overview of the Subgrantee Selection Process can be found in the CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2), available for download on the CPUC BEAD Program website. The CPUC hosted a webinar on BEAD Subgrantee Selection Process on December 3, 2024. The presentation materials are available here, and the webinar recording can be accessed here. The CPUC provides Subgrantee Selection Process training and technical support, which can be found on the CPUC BEAD Program website. Additional resources are also available here, which has an initial application checklist to help applicants prepare for Prequalification and Application phases, specifically noting items that may take longer to obtain or prepare.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
2.	What mapping tool will we use for qualified areas?	The mapping tool will be an integrated feature of the BEAD Grants Management System (GMS) which will be available on March 25, 2025. Currently, applicants may consult the Post-Challenge Process BEAD map for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program rollout here. The Post-Challenge Process BEAD map represents the results of California's BEAD Challenge Process submitted to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) in December 2024 and approved in January 2025. It identifies all BEAD-eligible Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs) in the state by FCC Location ID, incorporating adjudicated challenge determinations and enforceable commitments from internet service providers. The map is subject to revision prior to the opening of subgrantee selection to capture state and federal enforceable commitments or per NTIA reconciliation guidelines.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
3.	Is the NOFO the same as the Decision document?	The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) lays out the rules that all states must follow for awarding grants under the BEAD program, while the Decision outlines the specific implementation steps unique to the state.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
4.	Where can I find the NTIA-approved version of CA BEAD Volume II? Is the application guide	The CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2) is available for download on the CPUC BEAD Program website. The CPUC is currently developing Application materials, please check the CPUC BEAD Program website regularly	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0

	available yet? If so, where can I find it?	for updates. Additional resources are also available at the CPUC BEAD Resources webpage.	
5.	Will the EHCPLT be the same across the whole state or vary by area?	The Extremely High Cost Per Location Threshold will vary by area. It can be considered an "area budget" that determines whether proposals in a particular area are within reasonable costs to be awarded given the CPUC's overall allocated funds across the state. See CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2) Sections 5.10 and 5.11 for more information.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
6.	Can the CPUC allocate its BEAD funding solely to deploy fiber to unserved areas, or is it required to use the funding to serve both unserved and underserved populations using any feasible technology?	BEAD Program funds can be used for both unserved and underserved locations. All applicants will be required to submit a proposal to serve 100 percent of both unserved and underserved locations using the technology of the applicant's choice. Consistent with the NOFO, the CPUC will prioritize certain technologies in its selection process. See Initial Proposal volume 2 Sections 5.1.3, 5.4, and 5.7 for more details.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
7.	How will the EHCPLT be calculated? How will the "budget" approach to BEAD allocation be implemented?	The EHCPLT will be calculated based on a variety of data, including proposed costs in BEAD applications for each area (among other data sources). It can be considered an 'area budget' that determines whether proposals in a particular area are within reasonable costs to be awarded given the CPUC's overall allocated funds across the state. See CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2) Sections 5.10 and 5.11 for more information.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
8.	Does the State of California expect to have two rounds of BEAD application submissions, with fiber as the first round and hybrid as the second round?	All applicants will apply for BEAD within the same application window regardless of proposed technology. Fiber applications will be accepted at the same time as hybrid fiber-coax, fixed wireless, and alternative technology applications. Among all applications submitted in the application window, end-to-end fiber proposals are defined as "Priority Broadband Projects" and will be ranked above other technology proposals. The CPUC may, depending on the outcome of the received applications, conduct a second round to target areas that did not receive feasible proposals. See CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2) Sections 5.1.3, 5.1.4, and 5.11 for more details.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
9.	Why is the CPUC making BEAD a budget driven program which will impact how technology is chosen?	The CPUC's plan for how to award BEAD funds is determined by federal requirements based on provisions of the law that funded BEAD and consideration of guidance provided by National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The CPUC's proposed strategy is thus required to fit within the federal parameters. See NTIA's Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) Page 42-46 for information.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0

		NTIA's guidance will determine the type of technology (Reliable Broadband Service, Alternative Technologies) chosen. NTIA has determined that "Priority Broadband Projects" are those that use end-to-end fiber-optic architecture and will command the highest degree of priority. This is followed by "Qualifying Broadband" consisting of HFC, DSL, and LFW, and then "Alternative Technologies" consisting of ULFW and LEOs. See NTIA's [Reliable Broadband Service & Alternative Technologies Guidance](#) for more information The CPUC hosted a webinar on BEAD Program Design - Project Areas, Negotiations, & Selection on December 10, 2024. The presentation materials are available [here](#), and the webinar recording can be accessed [here](#).	
10.	Do you anticipate pausing or extending the state's BEAD deadlines as well?	At this time, the CPUC does not anticipate pausing or extending the BEAD program deadlines. The CPUC has announced the timeline for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program rollout, which is driven by NTIA requirements. The state is required to submit a Final Proposal by October 2, 2025, and NTIA has not provided any extensions at this time. Please note that the BEAD program timeline remains provisional and subject to modification. To view the CPUC BEAD Timeline, visit the [CPUC BEAD Program website](#).	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
11.	How do you rate applications proposing wireless technology?	National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) guidance will determine how wireless technology is rated. NTIA has determined that "Priority Broadband Projects" are those that use end-to-end fiber-optic architecture and will command the highest degree of priority. This is followed by "Qualifying Broadband" consisting of HFC, DSL, and LFW, and then "Alternative Technologies" consisting of ULFW and LEOs. See NTIA's [Reliable Broadband Service & Alternative Technologies Guidance](#) for more information. The scoring rubric for licensed fixed wireless and unlicensed fixed wireless projects is found in the CPUC's [Initial Proposal volume 2](#) (IPv2) under Section 5.3.3, available for download on the CPUC BEAD Program website. The CPUC also provides training and technical support on the Subgrantee Selection Process, which can be accessed through the [CPUC BEAD Program website](#). Presentation materials and video recordings can be found on the [CPUC BEAD events page](#).	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
12.	Is it possible to break up CBGs if they are very	Large Census Block Groups (CBG) will not be broken up. More information about Project Area definitions can be	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0

	large? Given the size of some of them and requirements to cross very rough terrain would make it very costly to run fiber.	found in the Section 5.7 of the CPUC's [Initial Proposal volume 2](link) (IPv2). For more information about the BEAD Subgrantee Selection Process scoring criteria and selection process, please refer to Section 5.1.3, 5.3, 5.8, 5.10, and 5.11. The CPUC hosted a webinar on BEAD Subgrantee Selection Process on December 3, 2024. The presentation materials and webinar recording can be accessed [here](link) and [here](link).	
13.	Is it correct that the cost per BSL is not a scoring factor for the CPUC? Is scoring the only selection criteria or are there other discretionary factors that the CPUC can use (like cost per BSL)?	Cost per BSL is not a direct scoring factor for the CPUC. However, the "Minimum BEAD Outlay" score is based on the match offered relative to funding request, creating an indirect relationship to per-location costs. While overall project cost and cost per BSL are not explicitly part of the scoring rubric, the CPUC has implemented processes to maximize the use of BEAD funds to achieve the program's goal of serving 100% of unserved and underserved locations in California.

To ensure effective use of BEAD funds and serve as many locations as possible, applications that exceed the area budget or the Extremely High Cost Per Location Threshold may not be considered. Applications will be ranked based on their score and technology type, with the highest-ranking application that fits within the CPUC's budget for the State and project area receiving provisional approval.

Additionally, the NTIA requires California's final proposal to balance the twin policy goals of providing broadband to every unserved and underserved location while staying within the State's BEAD allocation. As a result, not all applications may receive funding.

For more details on the BEAD Subgrantee Selection Process, including scoring criteria and selection methodology, refer to CPUC's [Initial Proposal volume 2](link) (IPv2) Sections 5.1.3, 5.3, 5.8, 5.10, and 5.11. The CPUC also hosted a webinar on BEAD Subgrantee Selection Process on December 3, 2024. The presentation materials and webinar recording can be accessed [here](link) and [here](link). | Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0 |
| 14. | We are considering a certain set of census block groups for BEAD funding. We are working under the impression that locations with Licensed Fixed Wireless as their only NTIA-approved Reliable Broadband Service will be considered "unserved" for BEAD funding. Could you | The recently posted map resulting from the CPUC's Challenge process indicates which locations are eligible for funding. This map will be updated closer to the application window to reflect additional enforceable commitments and may be updated per the NTIA's data reconciliation guidance. The eligibility of an individual location may be affected by several factors including results of the Challenge process, enforceable commitments and guidance from the NTIA.

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has released the Post-Challenge Process BEAD map for the | Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0 |

	please verify this assumption?	Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program rollout. To view the CPUC BEAD Map, visit the [CPUC BEAD Program website](#).	
15.	There are two adjacent census block groups in our BEAD project area. One has been designated "High-Cost" and is exempt from matching funds. The other requires matching funds. What is the formula for assigning costs associated with installing a fiber backbone along the common road that will feed location drops and other roads? Are we free to assign all costs to the "High-Cost" CBG?	Costs are apportioned automatically based on the number of eligible BSLs in the Project Area Unit (CBG) against the total project cost for total project number of eligible BSLs. Applicants are encouraged to reference the [Initial Proposal volume 2](#) (IPv2) and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) [Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)](#) for more information.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
16.	What is the low-cost service requirement?	The CPUC has developed a solid foundation to incorporate broad considerations of affordability into its policies and regulations, including this BEAD program design, through its Rulemaking to Establish a Framework and Processes for Assessing the Affordability of Utility Service (R.18-07-006). The CPUC requires all BEAD-funded projects to offer a low-cost broadband service for the life of the infrastructure. This service must: • Cost $30 per month or less ($75 per month or less on Tribal lands), inclusive of all government taxes and fees. The cost may be updated but may not exceed the CPI-U 12-month percentage point change for "All Items" and customers must be notified at least 30 days in advance of any price increase. • Be available to households at or below 200% of the federal poverty level or those eligible for the Affordable Connectivity Program. • Meet BEAD performance standards: at least 100 Mbps download, 20 Mbps upload, and latency no higher than 100 milliseconds. • Have no data caps, surcharges, or usage-based throttling, and is subject only to the same acceptable use policies to which subscribers of all other broadband internet access service plans offered to home subscribers by the participating subgrantee must adhere. • Allows free upgrades if the provider later offers a low-cost plan with higher speeds. • Includes free installation, a modem or router, and no minimum service term.	Feb 21, 2025/V. 2.0 Updated Mar 21, 2025

		The CPUC will consider waiver requests (See BEAD NOFO, Section IV.C.2.c.i, page 66) from prospective subgrantees regarding specific parameters of the low-cost service option (specifically, for the price charged for the low-cost service option); however, all subgrantees will still be required to offer a low-cost service option. For more details, see the CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2), Section 13.	
17.	How are PAUs compared in proposals if boundaries are determined by subgrantee proposals?	The subgrantee selection process is explained in Webinar 2 (Program Design) and Webinar 3 (Program Evaluation). Projects are ranked based on technology type, coverage percentage, and overall score. This is how projects are compared and reviewed. For more details on project evaluation and selection, refer to Section 5.11 of the Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2).	Feb 21, 2025/V. 2.0
18.	What are the details on subgrantee compliance?	For more information about Subgrantee Selection Process compliance, please refer to the CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2) Sections 17.2, 17.2, 17.3, and 17.4 for more information.	Feb 21, 2025/V. 2.0
19.	How does the BEAD selection process relate to FFA funding?	BEAD and FFA are separate programs with distinct rules and requirements. The awarding of BEAD funds is independent of the FFA program, and locations that receive FFA funding are not eligible for BEAD funding. Per the NTIA Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) P. 36-37, locations funded through other programs cannot receive duplicate funding. For more information on FFA rules and timelines, visit the Last Mile Federal Funding Account page.	Feb 21, 2025/V. 2.0
20.	Can we apply for BEAD funding to install fiber in up to 3 Underserved and Unserved locations in an area? Are we required to serve the entire CBG?	Unserved and underserved locations approved by the CPUC and NTIA are eligible for BEAD funding. Qualified applicants who commit to serving these locations can apply for a BEAD subgrant. Applicants must apply to serve 100% of unserved and underserved locations in their project area. Once they have submitted an application for 100% of unserved and underserved locations in a specific project area, they can submit an application to serve 90% of unserved and underserved locations in that same area. A project area consists of one or more Project Area Units (PAU), which include Census Block Group (CBG) or Tribal areas. Applicants can aggregate multiple PAU within a proposal to form a larger project area.	Feb 21, 2025/V. 2.0
21.	Will the BEAD locations currently shown as "eligible for funding" on the BEAD Challenge Map reflect the March 1 BDC submission?	The CPUC released a Post-Challenge Process BEAD map which references the FCC Fabric version and BDC dates it is based on. This map is subject to revision before subgrantee selection opens to incorporate state and federal enforceable commitments and align with NTIA reconciliation guidelines.	Feb 21, 2025/V. 2.0

22.	Will California be doing fixed awards for BEAD?	The CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2) states, "Consistent with California's desire to avail itself of NTIA-permitted 2 C.F.R. Part 200 exceptions, the CPUC may provide subgrants as fixed-amount subawards."	Feb 21, 2025/V. 2.0
23.	We are planning a project in a project area where we must construct fiber on sections of roads in neighboring PAUs to reach some of the locations in the project area. Is this acceptable under the grant rules, and are there any limits?	It is acceptable to build elements of infrastructure outside of the project area if it is necessary to serve locations in the project area. This should be shown in the project plan documents submitted as part of the application, which will be reviewed by the CPUC.	Mar 7, 2025/V. 3.0
24.	Do you plan to have a 2nd round of applications if not all eligible locations are taken in the 1st round?	The CPUC will identify the remaining PAUs that do not yet have a preliminary assignment and may undertake a second round to solicit additional grant applications for the remaining locations, depending on the number and location of the remaining eligible locations, as well as available BEAD funding. The CPUC's options for such a second round will depend in part on the time available under the timeline required by the BEAD rules. The second round process may include any of the following elements: revised PAU boundaries, limitation to unserved locations only, or other variations. See CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2) Sections 5.1.3, 5.1.4, and 5.11 for more details.	Mar 7, 2025/V. 3.0
25.	To what extent does the identification of high-need areas mean that Project Areas will be pre-drawn in eligibility maps? Can applicants define their own Project Areas?	Applicants can define their own Project Area by combining adjacent Project Area Units (PAUs), which are based on Census Block Groups (CBGs) and Tribal areas. Applicants can select any combination of PAUs, provided they form one contiguous Project Area. At least 50 percent of the PAUs in an applicant's Project Area must be high-need areas (Low-Income Area or Disadvantaged Community, including Tribal areas). Applicants may request a waiver of the 50 percent threshold if they have included all high-need areas that are immediately adjacent to non-high-need areas in their proposed Project Area. For Project Areas that include Tribal lands, applicants may submit the application without meeting the minimum threshold or maximum available inclusion requirements for high-need PAUs.	Mar 21, 2025/V. 4.0
26.	Are PAUs equivalent to CBGs, and can applicants aggregate adjacent PAUs into larger project areas?	Project Area Units (PAUs) are Census Block Groups (CBGs) or Tribal areas, with Tribal areas serving as the defining boundary where CBG and Tribal area boundaries differ. Applicants can aggregate adjacent PAUs to form a Project Area. For more details, please see the webinar on Project Area design and refer to Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2), p. 29, or the Decision, p. 47.	Mar 21, 2025/V. 4.0

General Application Information

#	Questions	Answers	Date/Version
1.	Where can I find information about the prequalification requirements?	Details about the Prequalification requirements in the Subgrantee Selection Process are included in the CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2) Section 5.1.4.1, available for download on the CPUC BEAD Program website. The CPUC hosted a webinar on BEAD Subgrantee Selection Process on December 3, 2024, which contains details of the Prequalification phase. The presentation materials are available here, and the webinar recording can be accessed here. Additional resources are also available here, which has an initial application checklist to help applicants prepare for Prequalification and Application phases, specifically noting items that may take longer to obtain or prepare. The CPUC provides Subgrantee Selection Process training and technical support, which can be found on the CPUC BEAD Program website.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
2.	What factors will be used to determine which subgrantees are selected?	A detailed overview of the Subgrantee Selection Process is provided in the CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2), available on the CPUC BEAD Program website. Additionally, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)'s BEAD Subgrantee Qualifications Evaluation Guide offers guidance on scoring and selection criteria for subgrantees. More information is available on the NTIA website. The CPUC also offers training and technical support for the Subgrantee Selection Process, accessible on its BEAD Program website.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
3.	Will the public be able to see the technical specs that applicants submit and what will the process be to do so?	Detailed network designs and technical specifications will not be disclosed to the public.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
4.	What do we need to do now to qualify? For example, if we are a CLEC do we need to provide audited financials or matching funds?	All applicants must submit: audited financials (or equivalent documentation, depending on the entity); a letter of commitment for a letter of credit or performance bond; and for most areas, matching funds of at least 25 percent of the total project cost (which is not required in NTIA-designated "High Cost Areas"). See Section 5.12.1 of the CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2) or the Financial Requirements webinar for more information. Some of these materials will be required for prequalification, while others will be required in the main application that will be scored. Applicants should begin	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0

#	Questions	Answers	Date/Version
		preparing all these documents, as they will all be required during the prequalification and application window.	
5.	What type of PE license is required?	Professional Engineer must be a Licensed Professional Engineer with a "clear" status. The license can be from any state or other eligible entity. See IPv2, p. 68.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
6.	What application components do you anticipate requiring the most lead time for applicants to complete?	Preparing prequalification materials may require significant lead time for applicants. A comprehensive overview of the Subgrantee Selection Process can be found in the CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2), available for download on the CPUC BEAD Program website. The CPUC hosted a webinar on BEAD Subgrantee Selection Process on December 3, 2024. The presentation materials are available here, and the webinar recording can be accessed here. Additional resources are also available here, which has an initial application checklist to help applicants prepare for Prequalification and Application phases, specifically noting items that may take longer to obtain or prepare. The CPUC also provides Subgrantee Selection Process training and technical support, which can be found on the CPUC BEAD Program website. Additional resources are also available at the CPUC BEAD Resources webpage.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
7.	Will the applicants receive any points for working with a government or nonprofit?	No, there will be no scoring points awarded for working with a government or nonprofit. For details on the Subgrantee Selection Process scoring criteria, please refer to Section 5.3 of the CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2).	Feb 21, 2025/V. 2.0
8.	Aside from a basic SAM.gov registration number, is there anything more at SAM that is needed?	Currently, only a basic SAM.gov registration number is required, but this may be subject to change. Check the CPUC BEAD Program website regularly for updates or email BEADgrant@cpuc.ca.gov with any inquiries.	Feb 21, 2025/V. 2.0
9.	Will we need to submit our Cyber Security and Supply Chain Risk management at the time of the application, or at the time of the award?	As stated in the CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2), applicants must attest that they: ▪ Have cybersecurity and supply chain risk management plans that are either operational (if they currently provide service) or ready to be operationalized upon service provision (if they do not yet provide service). ▪ Ensure their plans align with the latest National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) frameworks and guidance (see IPv2, p. 221 for details). ▪ Commit to regularly reevaluating and updating their plans.	Mar 7, 2025/V. 3.0

#	Questions	Answers	Date/Version
		▪ Submit their plans to the CPUC before the allocation of funds and provide a new version within 30 days if substantive changes occur. For more details, see IPv2, p. 220-221. According to IPv2, these plans must be submitted to the CPUC "prior to the allocation of funds." However, at the time of the application, applicants are only required to submit the attestations listed above and indicate how frequently their plans are updated. These plans will not be scored but will be reviewed to determine the applicant's eligibility to participate. Therefore, it is advisable to submit these attestations when the application window opens.	
10.	Are pre-application expenses allowable as part of the project application costs? If so, is there a cap on these expenses?	NTIA allows certain pre-application BEAD-eligible costs, but expenses related to preparing and submitting an application are not included. Additionally, applicants assume the risk for any pre-application costs incurred before receiving a formal subgrant award. To be eligible, pre-application costs must: ▪ be costs that would have been allowable if incurred post-award. ▪ Comply with grant requirements, including Build America, Buy America (BABA). ▪ Adhere to the cost principles outlined in 2 CFR 200. For example, engineering work required for an environmental assessment is typically an allowable pre-application expense. There is no cap for pre-application expenses, but applicants must include these costs in their financial, budget, and pro forma documentation within the application.	Mar 7, 2025/V. 3.0
11.	Is prequalification required?	Yes, all applicants must respond to all prequalification questions and submit any required materials. Submitted materials and certifications will be evaluated to determine whether the entity is eligible to participate in the process and qualify for BEAD grant funding. For more details, see the CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2), Section 5.3.1.	Mar 7, 2025/V. 3.0
12.	If an applicant fails to submit their Prequalification Application by the end of the Prequalification period, will they be prohibited from submitting a Project Application?	Yes. Applicants who do not complete a Prequalification Application will not be allowed to submit a Project Application. However, the CPUC may modify or adjust the timeline as necessary. Please check the CPUC website regularly for updates.	Mar 21, 2025/V. 4.0

BEAD Program Timeline

#	Questions	Answers	Date/Version
1.	What is the BEAD Program timeline?	The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has announced the timeline for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program rollout. Please note that the BEAD program timeline is provisional and subject to modification. To view the CPUC BEAD Timeline, visit the CPUC BEAD Program website.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
2.	Which release are you using for the fabric locations? Version 3 or 4?	The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has released the map for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program rollout. The Post-Challenge Process map reflects fabric version 4, dated December 31, 2023. To view the CPUC BEAD Map, visit the CPUC BEAD Program website. The map is subject to revision prior to the opening of subgrantee selection to capture state and federal enforceable commitments or per NTIA reconciliation guidelines.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
3.	When will the BEAD application be available, and how long will the application window be open?	The CPUC anticipates that the application will be available at the start of the Subgrantee Prequalification Period on March 25, 2025. The Prequalification Period will close on April 24, 2025. The Grant Application Window will open on April 2, 2025, and close on May 2, 2025. This provisional schedule is designed to meet NTIA-mandated deadlines for California and is subject to revision. Please plan accordingly and check the CPUC BEAD Program website for updates.	Feb 21, 2025/V. 4.0 Updated Mar 21, 2025
4.	How long will each grant last?	Based on the BEAD requirements, each grant will last up to four years, covering the full deployment timeline, including planning, design, procurement, construction, installation, network turn-up, testing, and service initiation. Deployment milestones must also account for necessary permits and CEQA approval. Additionally, "Speed to Deployment" is a scoring criterion, awarding up to 5 points for Priority Broadband Projects and 1 point for Other Last-Mile Broadband Projects. See the CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2) Section 5.3.2 and 5.12.3.5 and Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) P.18 for more details.	Feb 21, 2025/V. 2.0
5.	When will the PAU map be released, and where can it be found?	The PAU map will be available when the Application Portal opens for applicants to begin the application process. The CPUC will announce when the Application Portal becomes accessible. To view the CPUC BEAD Timeline, visit the CPUC BEAD Program website.	Mar 21, 2025/V. 4.0

BEAD Training and Resources

#	Questions	Answers	Date/Version
1.	Where can I find training information? Where will slide decks be posted for access after webinars?	The CPUC provides Subgrantee Selection Process training and technical support, which can be found on the CPUC BEAD Program website. Presentation materials and video recordings can be found on the CPUC BEAD events page.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0

Technical Assistance & Support

#	Questions	Answers	Date/Version
1.	What process will be used to ask questions and what is the estimated response time during the application window?	The CPUC is committed to addressing your questions as promptly as possible. Applicants can email BEADgrant@cpuc.ca.gov or attend the Office Hours for inquiries about the Subgrantee Selection Process. Due to a high volume of inquiries, we aim to respond within three business days.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
2.	Will there be technical assistance provided through the process?	The CPUC provides Subgrantee Selection Process training and technical support, which can be found on the CPUC BEAD Program website. For Subgrantee Selection Process inquiries, please email BEADgrant@cpuc.ca.gov. For questions about the BEAD Application Portal or technical support, contact Ready.net at cahelpdesk@ready.net.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0

Financial Capacity & Requirements

#	Questions	Answers	Date/Version
1.	What are the BEAD financial requirements?	Details about the Financial requirements in the Subgrantee Selection Process are included in the CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2) Section 5.12.1, available for download on the CPUC BEAD Program website. The CPUC provides Subgrantee Selection Process training and technical support, which can be found on the CPUC BEAD Program website. The CPUC hosted a webinar on BEAD Applicant Financial Requirements on January 9, 2025. The presentation materials are available here, and the webinar recording can be accessed here.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
2.	What are the CPUC's match requirements?	For most project areas, subgrantees must provide matching funds of at least 25 percent of total project costs, which can be provided as cash or in-kind. Matching contributions, including in-kind contributions, demonstrate commitment to a particular project and minimize BEAD funding outlay. For areas designated by NTIA as "high-cost," there is no match requirement. A high-cost area is a Census Block Group with at least 80 percent unserved locations in which NTIA has determined that the lifetime cost of building and operating broadband service is higher compared to the average cost of unserved areas. See pp. 3, 13, and 20 of the BEAD NOFO. NTIA has released a list of these areas, which the CPUC will make available as part of the application process. Details about the match requirements in the Subgrantee Selection Process are included in the CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2) Section 5.3.2, available for download on the CPUC BEAD Program website. The CPUC hosted a webinar on BEAD Matching Funds on January 21, 2025. The presentation materials are available here, and the webinar recording can be accessed here. Additionally, the NTIA has released the BEAD Match Primer, a guidance resource for Eligible Entities on matching funds.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
3.	a) The audited financial statement requirement is very difficult for small companies. Our audited financial statements will likely not be ready in the required	a) In the application, if a potential subgrantee does not have audited financial statements in the ordinary course of business, it must describe the circumstances and reasons for the lack of audited financials and provide financial statements from the prior fiscal year that contain substantially the same level of detail and	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0

#	Questions	Answers	Date/Version
	timeframe. Can you give us any advice on how best to comply with this requirement in time to try and be a subgrantee? Can the cost of acquiring the audited financials be an eligible reimbursable cost under the grant? Can the audited financials be provided after the grant is awarded?	information. A potential subgrantee without audited financial statements must also certify that it will provide audited financials within 12 weeks of submitting its application. Given the Subgrantee Selection Process timeline, the CPUC may accept 2023 audited financial statements. See CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2) Section 5.12.1.3 for more details on financial statements. Certain expenses incurred during application preparation and prior to award may be eligible if they are expenses that are eligible post-award project expenses and would have otherwise been incurred after the award. For example, expenses related to EHP preparation and consulting with federal agencies may be considered eligible expenses. However, audited financials do not fall into this category of expenses.	
	b) We are assuming the challenge map that shows unserved and underserved areas in pink and blue are areas the CPUC would be able to accept and review and award projects on. Is this a correct assumption?	b) The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has released the map for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program rollout. To view the CPUC BEAD Map, visit the CPUC BEAD Program website. The map is subject to revision prior to the opening of subgrantee selection to capture state and federal enforceable commitments or per NTIA reconciliation guidelines.	
4.	Can an applicant use their parent company's audited financial statements for the application with the understanding that if there is a BEAD award, the subsidiary company would need to comply with the FCC CFR single-audit requirement and have its own audit completed going forward?	An applicant may submit parent company audited financials as long as those financials include financials for the applicant as a subsidiary entity. Details about the Financial requirements in the Subgrantee Selection Process are included in the CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2) Section 5.12.1, available for download on the CPUC BEAD Program website. The CPUC provides Subgrantee Selection Process training and technical support, which can be found on the CPUC BEAD Program website. The CPUC hosted a webinar on BEAD Applicant Financial Requirements on January 9, 2025. The presentation materials and the webinar recording can be accessed here and here.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
5.	If an applicant indicates that they will be using a Performance Bond, are they allowed to instead provide a Letter of Credit once approved for BEAD?	An applicant may provide an alternative acceptable form of fulfilling the letter of credit or performance bond requirement than the one described in the application, but it must explain the reason for changing and the chosen form must satisfy BEAD program requirements. See CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2) Section 5.12.1.2 for more details. Details about the Financial requirements in the Subgrantee Selection Process are included in the	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0

#	Questions	Answers	Date/Version
		CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2) Section 5.12.1, available for download on the CPUC BEAD Program website. The CPUC provides Subgrantee Selection Process training and technical support, webinar and presentation slides can be found on the BEAD Events webpage. The CPUC hosted a webinar on BEAD Applicant Financial Requirements on January 9, 2025. The presentation materials and the webinar recording can be accessed here and here.	
6.	If an applicant has a proforma model they use internally, can that be submitted for the BEAD application instead of using the template?	Applicants must use the CPUC-provided template to ensure consistent information from each applicant. A detailed overview of the Subgrantee Selection Process is provided in the CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2), available on the CPUC BEAD Program website. Additionally, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)'s BEAD Subgrantee Qualifications Evaluation Guide offers guidance on scoring and selection criteria for subgrantees. More information is available on the NTIA website. The CPUC also offers training and technical support for the Subgrantee Selection Process, accessible on its BEAD Program website.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
7.	Are audited financial statements required at the time of application or only after a grant is awarded?	Audited financial statements are required during the application phase. According to Section 5.12.1.3 of the CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2), applicants must submit audited financial statements from the prior fiscal year, prepared by an independent certified public accountant. If an applicant does not have audited financials as part of its ordinary business operations, it must: ▪ Explain why audited financials are unavailable. ▪ Provide financial statements from the prior fiscal year with equivalent detail. ▪ Certify that it will submit audited financials within 12 weeks of applying. Alternative financial reporting options are available for public or similar entities with different requirements.	Feb 21, 2025/V. 2.0
8.	Our BEAD project area will consist of two adjacent Census Block Groups (CBGs). One has been designated as High-Cost	The match requirement will be calculated as a proportion of the number of BSLs in the High-Cost PAUs to the total BSLs in all project PAUs. For example, if the total number of eligible BSLs in a proposed project is 100,	Feb 21, 2025/V. 2.0

#	Questions	Answers	Date/Version
	by the NTIA and is exempt from the 25% matching funds rule; the other requires a 25% match. How is the match requirement calculated?	and 10 of these are in High-Cost PAUs, then the minimum match requirement that would apply to the project as a whole would be: [(100-10) x 25% + (10 x 0%]/100 = 22.5%	
9.	Nonprofits encounter challenges with the Letter of Credit (LOC) requirement, which can be difficult for smaller entities to obtain due to limited collateral. Can you provide guidance in navigating the LOC requirement or the LOC waiver process? Are there alternative solutions to meet the requirement, such as holding a CPCN?	NTIA released a waiver that was adopted by CPUC in Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2) that allows for alternatives to the 25% letter of credit requirement. These alternatives are: 1) Obtain a performance bond for 100% of the BEAD subaward amount; 2) Choose to have their letter of credit or performance bond obligation progressively reduced (from 25 percent or 100 percent of the subaward amount) with completion of deployment milestones based on a percent buildout completion schedule provided by the CPUC; 3) Request that the committed amount for the letter of credit or the performance bond be reduced where: a) Funding will be issued on a reimbursable basis and the CPUC has implemented all other subgrantee accountability measures as set out in the BEAD NOFO rules (Section IV.C.1.b); b) Funding will be on a reimbursable basis for periods of no more than six months; and c) The letter of credit or performance bond remains at 10 percent of the subaward until the subgrantee successfully demonstrates 100 percent project or completion or the period of performance for the subaward has ended. See more information in the webinar on Financial Requirements or the Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2), Section 5.12.1.2 on Letter of Credit.	Feb 21, 2025/V. 2.0
10.	If a county contributes an "in kind" contribution, like access to the county right-of-way to bury fiber, does that "in-kind" contribution go towards the total project cost calculation? How is that valued? Are there other types of "in-kind" contributions by counties that could be included in the total project cost?	Please see the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) (pp. 20-22) and the webinar on Matching Funds for more information. Generally, in-kind contributions from units of local government like counties can be counted towards the total project cost calculation if they meet requirements. In-kind contributions must be allowable and allocable project expenses. Contributions should be an asset with value and should be dedicated to the project. NTIA listed potential sources of in-kind contributions that, depending on the particular property or service and federal cost principles, could include: "employee or volunteer services; equipment; supplies; indirect costs;	Feb 21, 2025/V. 2.0

#	Questions	Answers	Date/Version
		computer hardware and software; and use of facilities," as well as "waiver of fees associated with access to rights of way, pole attachments, conduits, easements, or access to other types of infrastructure." In-kind contributions can be valued through the market value (i.e., what is charged normally on the market for that right-of-way fee or piece of equipment).	
11.	Financial surety letters typically specify a set amount. How can we submit these details if our project design isn't finalized by the application window? Can we submit a different amount in the application window?	The application requires a letter of commitment or letter of surety from the financial institution issuing the letter of credit or performance bond. Since the project details may not be finalized at the time of application, the financial institution can provide an "up to" value based on the applicant's estimated needs. After receiving an award, the applicant must submit a finalized letter of credit or performance bond reflecting the exact amount required for the project.	March 7, 2025/V. 3.0

Technical Capacity & Eligibility

#	Questions	Answers	Date/Version
1.	What are the conduit access point requirements?	The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) [Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)](#) Section titled "Conduit Access Points", pg. 66 states: "Any Funded Network deployment project that involves laying fiber-optic cables or conduit underground or along a roadway must include interspersed conduit access points at regular and short intervals for interconnection by unaffiliated entities. Where a project proposes to lay conduit, Eligible Entities shall require prospective subgrantees to propose to deploy a reasonable amount of excess conduit capacity and to propose a conduit access point interval as part of the grant application process and shall consider the adequacy of the prospective subgrantee's proposed excess conduit capacity and access points when evaluating the application."	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0

Compliance with Labor Laws

#	Questions	Answers	Date/Version
1.	What are the BEAD labor laws and how will they be operationalized?	Details about the Labor Standards and Protection requirements in the Subgrantee Selection Process are included in the CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2) Section 8, 9, and 10, available for download on the CPUC BEAD Program website. Additionally, the CPUC provides Subgrantee Selection Process training and technical support, webinar and presentation slides can be found on the BEAD Events webpage.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
2.	Please address the jurisdiction of local unions. Will the CPUC sign a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) with unions?	The CPUC will award grants to subgrantees for BEAD broadband and alternative technologies deployment and will not enter into agreements directly. That said, CPUC's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2) states: "In scoring past and future compliance with state labor laws, the CPUC will the following optional practices and award points on the basis of robust and binding commitments: …Using project labor agreements…" Although Subgrantees are encouraged, but not required, to utilize project labor agreements, the CPUC scoring criteria awards up to 20 points "based on (1) a demonstrated history of compliance with federal and state labor laws; (2) demonstrated commitments to future compliance with federal labor laws; and (3) the quality and contents of labor practice-related items submitted during the Application Phase." The applicant is encouraged to review the CPUC's scoring criteria found in the IPv2 Section 5.3.2, Sections 8 "Labor Standards and Protections," and Section 9 "Workforce Readiness" for more information. For general questions about the CPUC BEAD Program, visit the CPUC BEAD Program website.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
3.	The selection criteria include factors such as affordability, technology, matching funds, and speed to deployment. Are there any factors that consider public/ worker safety?	There are several sections in California's Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv.2) that address workplace safety and will be the guide for this program. Sections 5.3.1 and 5.12.4 of IPv.2 will require subgrantees to certify and discuss several safety related topics during the qualification phase. This includes adherence to existing laws, creation of safety committees, and training to ensure projects are completed at a high standard. This will also include workforce safety plans and practices, including adherence to national and state safety codes and standards. This will be required of subgrantees as well as the contractors and subcontractors they utilize.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0

#	Questions	Answers	Date/Version
		Section 8 of IPv2 describes how safety and training will be a factor in scoring applications. It also discusses the regular reporting that will be required from awarded projects for safety training, licensing, and compliance with applicable safety and training laws. Section 9.3 of IPv2 discusses the importance of worker safety and how the program will ensure "strong labor standards and use of a highly trained, safe and effective workforce." It also discusses the importance of union checks and oversight on safety. If a subgrantee chooses to use non-union labor, section 9.5 of IPv2 will require details on how subgrantee will adhere to safety training, certification, and licensure requirements. Section 17.2.7 of IPv2 details the periodic visits to awarded projects to ensure that required safety practices are being followed. Specifically concerning underground infrastructure, sections 11.1.1 and 11.1.2 of IPv2 discuss projects accessing State conduit and local community conduit, which will reduce the need for digging. Section 11.2 of IPv2 describes the "dig-once" goal of this program, which will also minimize digging. There is also a requirement in the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) that funded underground infrastructure should be available for lease by future projects by different entities. These conditions should lower the amount of digging that will be required for current and even future projects. Less digging should lower the chances of damaging other utilities.	
4.	Who is responsible for providing certifications of compliance with labor practices?	The authorized certifying official of the applicant is responsible for certifying compliance with labor practices.	March 7, 2025/V. 3.0

Supply Chain Compliance

#	Questions	Answers	Date/Version
1.	What are the key grant application requirements for construction and material sourcing?	A detailed overview of the Subgrantee Selection Process application requirements is available in Section 5.3 of the CPUC's [Initial Proposal volume 2](#) (IPv2). Application materials are still being developed. Additionally, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)'s [BEAD Subgrantee Qualifications Evaluation Guide](#) provides further guidance. The CPUC also offers training and technical support for the Subgrantee Selection Process, accessible on the [CPUC BEAD Program website](#) and [BEAD Events](#) page. The CPUC BEAD program follows NTIA construction sourcing guidance of Build America, Buy America (BABA) restrictions on purchases of fiber equipment and the federal Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act of 2019. BABA, established under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), requires federally funded infrastructure projects to prioritize U.S.-manufactured materials, including: • Construction materials, iron, steel, manufactured products, and electronics. • Compliance with BABA for all BEAD-funded projects. • Potential federal agencies waivers for certain BABA requirements. NTIA has issued a limited waiver for some BABA provisions under BEAD but maintains many domestic sourcing requirements. For more detail, refer to the NTIA [Build America, Buy America Compliance and Documentation Requirements and Procedures](#) guidance.	Feb 21, 2025/V. 2.0
2.	What does the "certification of compliance with legal and program requirements including Build America, Buy America (BABA), environmental and historic preservation, and FCC regulations" in the application checklist mean? How does an applicant certify compliance?	The authorized certifying official of the applicant is responsible for certifying compliance with BABA, EHP, and other regulations. While additional processes involving third parties and/or agencies may be required post-award, the prequalification certification requires the authorized certifying official to attest to a commitment to compliance.	March 7, 2025/V. 3.0
3.	Does an ISP need to comply with Build America, Buy	Build America, Buy America (BABA) compliance only applies to the BEAD funded project. For example, any	March 7, 2025/V. 3.0

#	Questions	Answers	Date/Version
	America (BABA) across all its projects and operations, or only for BEAD-funded projects?	in-kind match or equipment purchased for the BEAD project must comply with BABA. However, an ISP's existing infrastructure that is not used for the proposed BEAD project or as an in-kind match does not need to comply with BABA.	

Roles & Participation Guidelines

#	Questions	Answers	Date/Version
1.	It sounds like grantees must be internet service providers. Will there be opportunity for fiber construction companies to apply who do not provide residential service?	Subgrantees can be any type of entity, including public entities, Tribal entities, utilities, co-ops, non-profits, internet service providers, new entrants, and others. A fiber construction company can partner with an internet service provider to fulfill BEAD requirements but cannot apply on their own. The applicant will be evaluated based on operational history and ability to meet BEAD requirements and will certify that it will meet BEAD operational service and performance standards. If the applicant is not itself the service provider and is awarded the subgrant, it will be responsible for meeting all the requirements through its identified partners. Applicants are encouraged to reference the Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2) Section 5.1.1 and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for more information.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
2.	We have two entities. One is a telecom engineering and construction company that does not own or operate any of the infrastructure that it builds, nor does it have any subscribers. However, the same group also owns a small WISP. The WISP has over a decade of operating experience but would struggle to meet some of the financial obligations independently. It is registered with the FCC, owns and operates telecom infrastructure, and services subscribers. Which entity should apply for funding?	The CPUC cannot indicate which entity should apply or which entity would have a better chance of receiving funding were it to apply. Subgrantees can be any type of entity, including public entities, Tribal entities, utilities, co-ops, non-profits, internet service providers, new entrants, and others. Any applicant who is willing and able to construct, operate, and provide end-user service in accordance with the BEAD Program requirements can be considered for subgrantee award. Per BEAD requirements, applicants must demonstrate their operational, managerial, financial, and technical capability in the application in order to be considered a qualified applicant. The applicant may - through its partnerships - demonstrate a history of last-mile operational service, but it is the lead applicant that will be responsible for ensuring its commitments and make its certifications. A detailed overview of the Subgrantee Selection Process is provided in the CPUC's Initial Proposal version 2 (IPv2), available on the CPUC BEAD Program website. Additionally, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)'s BEAD Subgrantee Qualifications Evaluation Guide offers guidance on scoring and selection criteria for subgrantees. More information is available on the NTIA website.	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0

#	Questions	Answers	Date/Version
		The CPUC also offers training and technical support for the Subgrantee Selection Process, accessible on its [BEAD Program website]().	
3.	Are there any requirements that differ from the posted checklist for Tribal entities?	CPUC is currently developing the application materials and will provide training and technical support for addressing this topic. For more information about BEAD requirements with regard to Tribal entities, please refer to Section 4.3 of the [Initial Proposal volume 2 (IPv2)](). The CPUC provides Subgrantee Selection Process training and technical support, which can be found on the CPUC [BEAD Program website]().	Feb 11, 2025/V. 1.0
4.	Are there specific rules for bidding in partnerships?	Yes, the lead applicant must make all commitments and certifications in the application. BEAD Program requirements apply to both the lead applicant and its partners. Additionally, partnerships must be exclusive within the BEAD grant opportunity to prevent conflicts of interest and collusion. This means: ▪ A partner cannot participate in multiple partnerships. ▪ A partner cannot provide more than one proposal for overlapping areas, whether independently or with a partner.	Feb 21, 2025/V. 2.0

BEAD Mapping

#	Questions	Answers	Date/Version
1.	What should we do if we have questions about specific locations, such as missing addresses, missing enforceable commitments, missing location IDs, or locations with no geographic markers (e.g. a rock or empty field)?	For questions about specific locations, email BEAD@cpuc.ca.gov with a list of locations and a description of the issue for each.	Mar 7, 2025/V. 3.0