

South Dakota

Benefit of the Bargain Final Proposal

September 19, 2025



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OVERVIEW

The South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED), Broadband Office, has drafted the following Final Proposal, as required under the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD). Upon receipt and consideration of comments to this document, the South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development will submit this document for consideration to the National Telecommunications and Information Association (NTIA), the administrators of BEAD, including the Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Upon approval of this plan, South Dakota's Broadband Office, will be able to access the remaining program funds required to implement the Final Proposal.

Comments on the BEAD Final Proposal should be submitted [here](#) by 5:00 PM on September 26, 2025, for review and consideration.

FINAL PROPOSAL DATA SUBMISSION

0.1 Attachment (Required): Complete and submit the Subgrantees CSV file (named “fp_subgrantees.csv”) using the NTIA template provided.

See attachments at <https://sdgoed.com/partners/connectsd/bead/>

0.2 Attachment (Required): Complete and submit the Deployment Projects CSV file (named “fp_deployment_projects.csv”) using the NTIA template provided.

See attachments at <https://sdgoed.com/partners/connectsd/bead/>

0.3 Attachment (Required): Complete and submit the Locations CSV file (named “fp_locations.csv”) using the NTIA template provided. The Location IDs in this list must match the NTIA-approved final list of eligible locations.

See attachments at <https://sdgoed.com/partners/connectsd/bead/>

0.4 Attachment (Required): Complete and submit the No BEAD Locations CSV file (named “fp_no_BEAD_locations.csv”) using the NTIA template provided. The Location IDs in this list must match the NTIA-approved final list of eligible locations.

See attachments at <https://sdgoed.com/partners/connectsd/bead/>

0.5 Question (Y/N): If the Eligible Entity intends to use BEAD funds to serve CAIs, does the Eligible Entity certify that it ensures coverage of broadband service to all unserved and underserved locations, as identified in the NTIA-approved final list of eligible locations and required under 47 U.S.C. § 1702(h)(2)?

NO

0.6 Attachment (Required – Conditional on a ‘Yes’ Response to Intake Question 0.5): Complete and submit the CAIs CSV file (named “fp_cai.csv”) using the NTIA template provided. Although CAIs are not included under (f)(1) deployment projects, to confirm the Eligible Entity’s compliance with the BEAD prioritization framework and identify BEAD-funded CAIs, the NTIA template is required. The Eligible Entity must only include CAIs funded via BEAD in this list; the Eligible Entity may not propose funding CAIs that were not present on the approved final list from the Eligible Entity’s Challenge Process results.

N/A

SUBGRANTEE SELECTION PROCESS OUTCOMES (REQUIREMENT 1)

1.1: Text Box: Describe how the Eligible Entity's deployment Subgrantee Selection Process undertaken is consistent with that approved by NTIA in Volume II of the Initial Proposal as modified by the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice.

South Dakota's Subgrantee Selection Process followed the process approved by NTIA in the accepted Initial Proposal which was modified as necessary to incorporate the BEAD June 6, 2025, Restructuring Policy Notice.

Following NTIA's release of the Restructuring Policy Notice, South Dakota's Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED), Broadband Office issued notice on June 10, 2025, of a BEAD Program Update. The update provided details regarding the Benefit of the Bargain (BoB) application round, a link to the Restructuring Policy Notice, and a link to the NTIA fact sheet.

Because South Dakota had been in the middle of its initial round of the Subgrantee Selection Process when news was released that NTIA was reviewing their policies and would be releasing a new policy notice, South Dakota chose to pause its work and not move forward with selecting any potential awardees.

As South Dakota continued to receive details and guidance regarding the June 6 Policy Notice changes, South Dakota made every effort to keep potential applicants abreast of all updated information. Details were posted on our state website, sent out via email, and multiple rounds of "Office Hours" were held to remain open, honest, and transparent. Frequently asked questions (FAQs) that came from the "Office Hours" were then uploaded to our website and potential awardees were informed of the FAQs via email.

South Dakota opened its BoB Subgrantee Selection Process on July 2 and remained open until 5 p.m. (CT) on July 18. The BoB round allowed applicants, regardless of technology or prior participation, to compete for funding of the state's unserved and underserved locations.

Eligible applicants, who had registered and had a CostQuest license, were able to log into our application portal on July 2 to begin their application. Once complete, a team of representatives from GOED's Broadband Office and other qualified departments examined each application using the new June 6 Policy Notice guidance.

1.2 Text Box: Describe the steps that the Eligible Entity took to ensure a fair, open, and competitive process, including processes in place to ensure training, qualifications, and objectiveness of reviewers.

The South Dakota Broadband Office (SDBO) implemented a structured, transparent, and inclusive process to ensure fairness, openness, and competitiveness in response to the June 6, 2025 BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice. The following steps were taken:

1. Transparent Communication and Equal Access

SDBO promptly notified all potential and previous applicants of program changes and published the revised BEAD application on the state website. Multiple updates were issued as new guidance became available, and all applicants were informed of deadlines, eligibility, and submission procedures. A secure portal was created to ensure equal access to the application process.

2. Inclusive Eligibility Criteria

No restrictions were placed on applicant types. Both traditional and non-traditional broadband providers—including fiber-optic, licensed fixed wireless, and LEO satellite operators—were encouraged to apply, fostering a competitive and diverse applicant pool.

3. Objective Evaluation Framework

In alignment with NTIA guidance, SDBO discontinued the use of the state's Volume 2 scoring rubric and adopted a pass/fail system for initial application review. This ensured that all applicants were evaluated on a level playing field based on completeness and compliance with the June 6 policy. Incomplete applications were not disqualified and were given the opportunity to address any application issues during a 24-hour curing period.

4. Qualified and Trained Reviewers

SDBO ensured that all reviewers were qualified and trained to assess applications consistently and objectively. Reviewers were assigned to evaluate specific sections of applications rather than entire submissions, reducing the potential for bias and conflicts of interest.

5. Structured Review Process

After initial screening, applications were further evaluated based on managerial, technical, and operational capabilities. This multi-phase review process was designed to be impartial and aligned with federal requirements, ensuring that all applicants were judged fairly and consistently.

6. Anti-Collusion Safeguards

Procedures were implemented to prevent collusion and maintain the integrity of the subgrantee selection process. Internal controls and reviewer separation protocols were enforced to ensure impartiality throughout the evaluation.

7. Curing and Negotiation Rounds

SDBO conducted targeted outreach to cure incomplete applications and opened structured negotiation windows to address coverage gaps. These rounds allowed applicants to revise and expand proposals, ensuring that all viable providers had a fair opportunity to compete and contribute to the state's broadband goals.

Through these measures, SDBO upheld a fair, open, and competitive process that prioritized transparency, objectivity, and inclusivity in alignment with BEAD program requirements.

1.3 Text Box: Affirm that, when no application was initially received, the Eligible Entity followed a procedure consistent with the process approved in the Initial Proposal.

Consistent with the process in the approved and revised Initial Proposal per the BEAD June 6 Restructuring Policy Notice, SDBO conducted the BoB round, which included an initial application round. In areas that LEOs were determined to be non-priority, negotiation rounds were completed with Priority Broadband providers to see if additional locations could be served.

1.4 Text Box: If applicable, describe the Eligible Entity's methodology for revising its eligible CAI list to conform with Section 4 of the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice.

South Dakota did not have any CAIs on its list of BEAD eligible locations.

1.5 Question (Y/N): Certify that the Eligible Entity will retain all subgrantee records in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.334 at all times, including retaining subgrantee records for a period of at least 3 years from the date of submission of the subgrant's final expenditure report. This should include all subgrantee network designs, diagrams, project costs, build-out timelines and milestones for project implementation, and capital investment schedules submitted as a part of the application process.

Yes

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION (REQUIREMENT 3)

3.1 Text Box: Has the Eligible Entity taken measures to: (a) ensure that each subgrantee will begin providing services to each customer that desires broadband service within the project area not later than four years after the date on which the subgrantee receives the subgrant; (b) ensure that all BEAD subgrant activities are completed at least 120 days prior to the end of the Eligible Entity's period of performance, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.344; and (c) ensure that all programmatic BEAD grant activities undertaken by the

Eligible Entity are completed by the end of the period of performance for its award, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.344.

SDBO ensured applicants seeking to deploy network facilities are vetted to meet the minimum qualifications for financial and managerial capacity, technical and operational capability, and other requirements outlined in the 47 U.S.C. § 1702(g)(2)(A), the BEAD NOFO, South Dakota's BEAD approved Initial Proposal Volume 2, and supplementary NTIA guidance.

Through subgrantee monitoring and oversight, as outlined in the BEAD Program Monitoring Plan, SDBO will track project progress according to the timeline and milestones submitted in the application. Our office will provide technical assistance throughout the period of performance to support the resolution of any delays or barriers to deployment in a timely manner. Through active subgrantee monitoring and frequent engagement with Subgrantees, SDBO will ensure that all BEAD subgrant activities are completed at least 120 days prior to the end of the Eligible Entity's period of performance, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.34

OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESSES (REQUIREMENT 4)

4.1 Question (Y/N): Does the Eligible Entity have a public waste, fraud, and abuse hotline, and a plan to publicize the contact information for this hotline?

Yes.

4.2 Attachments: Upload the following two required documents: (1) BEAD program monitoring plan; (2) Agency policy documentation which includes the following practices: a. Distribution of funding to subgrantees for, at a minimum, all deployment projects on a reimbursable basis (which would allow the Eligible Entity to withhold funds if the subgrantee fails to take the actions the funds are meant to subsidize) or on a basis determined by the terms and conditions of a fixed amount subaward agreement; and b. Timely subgrantee (to Eligible Entity) reporting mandates.

See attachments at <https://sdgoed.com/partners/connectsd/bead/>

4.3 Question (Y/N): Certify that the subgrant agreements will include, at a minimum, the following conditions:

Compliance with Section VII.E of the BEAD NOFO, as modified by the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice, including timely subgrantee reporting mandates, including at least semiannual reporting, for the duration of the subgrant to track the effectiveness of the use of funds provided;

Compliance with obligations set forth in 2 C.F.R. Part 200 and the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions;

Compliance with all relevant obligations in the Eligible Entity's approved Initial and Final Proposals, including the BEAD General Terms and Conditions and the Specific Award Conditions incorporated into the Eligible Entity's BEAD award;

Subgrantee accountability practices that include distribution of funding to subgrantees for, at a minimum, all deployment projects on a reimbursable basis;

Subgrantee accountability practices that include the use of claw back provisions between the Eligible Entity and any subgrantee (i.e., provisions allowing recoupment of funds previously disbursed);

Mandate for subgrantees to publicize telephone numbers and email addresses for the Eligible Entity's Office of Inspector General (or comparable entity) and/or subgrantees' internal ethics office (or comparable entity) for the purpose of reporting waste, fraud or abuse in the Program. This includes an acknowledge of the responsibility to produce copies of materials used for such purposes upon request of the Federal Program Officer; and

Mechanisms to provide effective oversight, such as subgrantee accountability procedures and practices in use during subgrantee performance, financial management, compliance, and program performance at regular intervals to ensure that subgrantee performance is consistently assessed and tracked over time.

Yes.

LOCAL COORDINATION (REQUIREMENT 5)

5.1 Text Box: Describe the public comment period and provide a high-level summary of the comments received by the Eligible Entity during the public comment period, including how the Eligible Entity addressed the comments.

SDBO conducted a 7-day public comment period, from September 19 – September 26, to allow everyone the opportunity to provide feedback. South Dakota's Broadband Office made the Final Proposal available for public comment through a public posting on their website and by announcing the public comment period through email, a press release, and notification to all mailing list subscribers. Anyone with comments could notify the South Dakota Broadband Office using an online comment form until the publicized close date.

INSERT COMMENTS FOR PUBLIC PERIOD

CHALLENGE PROCESS RESULTS (REQUIREMENT 6)

6.1 Question (Y/N): Certify that the Eligible Entity has successfully completed the BEAD Challenge Process and received approval of the results from NTIA.

Yes.

6.2 Text Box: Provide a link to the website where the Eligible Entity has publicly posted the final location classifications (unserved/underserved/CAIs) and note the date that it was publicly posted.

South Dakota's Broadband Office publicly posted its final location classifications here: <https://sdgoed.com/partners/connectsd/bead/>, with the downloadable link available here: https://sdgoed.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Broadband_SE_2025-1.xlsx This link was posted on the above website on February 3, 2025.

UNSERVED AND UNDERSERVED LOCATIONS (REQUIREMENT 7)

Coverage of Unserved Locations

7.1 Question (Y/N): Certify whether the Eligible Entity will ensure coverage of broadband service to all unserved locations within its jurisdiction, as identified upon conclusion of the Challenge Process required under 47 U.S.C. § 1702(h)(2).

Yes.

7.2 Text Box: If the Eligible Entity does not serve an unserved location because it is either financially incapable or has determined that costs to serve the location would be unreasonably excessive, explain and include a strong showing of how the Eligible Entity made that determination.

South Dakota does not have any unserved location because of excess costs.

7.3 Attachment (Optional): If applicable to support the Eligible Entity's response to Question 7.2, provide relevant files supporting the Eligible Entity's determination.

N/A

Coverage of Underserved Locations

7.4 Question (Y/N): Certify whether the Eligible Entity will ensure coverage of broadband service to all underserved locations within its jurisdiction, as identified upon conclusion of the Challenge Process required under 47 U.S.C. § 1702(h)(2).

Yes.

7.5 Text Box: If the Eligible Entity does not serve an underserved location because it is either financially incapable or has determined that costs to serve the location would be unreasonable excessive, explain and include a strong showing of how the Eligible Entity made that determination.

South Dakota will provide service to all underserved locations.

7.6 Attachment (Optional): If applicable to support the Eligible Entity's response to Question 7.5, provide relevant files supporting the Eligible Entity's determination.

N/A

7.7 Question (Y/N): Certify that the Eligible Entity has utilized the provided reason codes to investigate and account for locations that do not require BEAD funding, that the Eligible Entity will utilize reason codes 1, 2, and 3 for the entire period of performance, and that the Eligible Entity will maintain documentation, following the guidelines provided by NTIA, to justify its determination if there is a reason to not serve any unserved or underserved location on the NTIA-approved Challenge Process list through a BEAD project. The documentation for each location must be relevant for the specific reason indicated by the Eligible Entity in the fp_no_BEAD_locations.csv file. The Eligible Entity shall provide the documentation for any such location for NTIA review, as requested during Final Proposal review or after the Final Proposal has been approved.

Yes

7.8 Question (Y/N): Certify that the Eligible Entity has accounted for all enforceable commitments after the submission of its challenge results, including state enforceable commitments and federal enforceable commitments that the Eligible Entity was notified of and did not object to, and/or federally-funded awards for which the Eligible Entity has discretion over where they are spent (e.g., regional commission funding or NTIA | 54 Capital Projects Fund/State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds), in its list of proposed projects.

Yes.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF PLANS FOR COST AND BARRIER REDUCTION, COMPLIANCE WITH LABOR LAWS, LOW-COST PLANS, AND NETWORK RELIABILITY AND RESILIENCE (REQUIREMENT 11)

11.1 Text Box: Provide the implementation status (Complete, In Progress, or Not Started) of plans described in the approved Initial Proposal Requirement 14 related to reducing costs and barriers to deployment.

Assisting Subgrantees through Permitting

SDBO has Not Started this step. As identified in the BEAD Five-Year Action Plan, permitting, especially for certain service areas in federal lands, is a potential barrier to speedy broadband deployment. These areas generally fall within the western part of the state (around the Black Hills) and are under the federal purview of the United States Forest Service. Further, local permitting can pose challenges and delays to deployment. The SDBO is able to contact local permitting leads when needed to help alleviate bottle necks in the permitting process. Relationships were cultivated through past experiences with ConnectSD. The Broadband Office intends to support subgrantees as they work through the permitting process at local, state, and federal levels. These efforts may include work with federal and state agencies, expanding tracking capabilities to understand where permitting delays may occur, and promoting practices that support permitting speed and compliance.

Coordination with SDDOT

SDBO considers this initiative In Progress. Because SDDOT oversees many infrastructure projects, in particular the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), the organization plays an important role in broadband deployment efforts. The STIP is a listing of projects over a four-year time horizon, developed through the Department of Transportation, Transportation Commission, state and federal agencies, local and tribal governments, metropolitan planning organizations, public agencies, transportation providers, citizens, and other relevant parties. This comprehensive overview of projects is available in tabular form, as well as an interactive map. While South Dakota does not have a codified dig-once policy, in practice the existing relationships between providers and SDDOT paired with the broadband coordinator's efforts create the environment for coordination to take place. SDBO plans to build on the strong existing relationship it has with SDDOT, especially as the broadband deployment activity increases over the duration of the BEAD program. There is already ongoing collaboration among municipalities, utility companies, local organizations and other relevant players to streamline rights of way, allow reasonable access, and coordinate SDDOT projects for dig once opportunities. Through coordination with SDDOT, the Broadband Team can bolster communication, mitigate delays, and reduce some of the common barriers to speedy deployment.

Letter of Credit and Matching Funds Waivers

The Office considers this initiative In Progress. In order that prospective subgrantees are not excluded from BEAD funding opportunities based on cost barriers to the subgrantee, South Dakota will seek waivers for up-to the 25 percent Matching Funds requirement.

These waivers are sought in the interest of serving the public and enabling South Dakota to effectuate the purposes of both the BEAD program and ConnectSD objective to connect every citizen to high-speed reliable broadband internet.

11.2 Question (Y/N): Affirm that the Eligible Entity required subgrantees to certify compliance with existing federal labor and employment laws.

Yes.

11.3 Text Box (Optional – Conditional on a ‘No’ Response to Intake Question 11.2): If the Eligible Entity does not affirm that subgrantees were required to certify compliance with federal labor and employment laws, explain why the Eligible Entity was unable to do so.

N/A

11.4 Question (Y/N): Certify that all subgrantees selected by the Eligible Entity will be required to offer a low-cost broadband service option for the duration of the 10-year Federal interest period.

Yes.

11.5 Text Box (Optional – Conditional on a ‘No’ Response to Intake Question 11.4): If the Eligible Entity does not certify that all subgrantees selected by the Eligible Entity will be required to offer a low-cost broadband service option for the duration of the 10- year Federal interest period, explain why the Eligible Entity was unable to do so.

N/A

11.6 Question (Y/N): Certify that all subgrantees have planned for the reliability and resilience of BEAD-funded networks.

Yes.

11.7 Text Box (Optional – Conditional on a ‘No’ Response to Intake Question 11.6): If the Eligible Entity does not certify that subgrantees have ensured planned for the reliability and resilience of BEAD-funded networks in their network designs, explain why the Eligible Entity was unable to do so.

N/A

SUBSTANTIATION OF PRIORITY BROADBAND PROJECTS (REQUIREMENT 12)

12.1 Text Box: Describe how the Eligible Entity applied the definition of Priority Project as defined in the Infrastructure Act and the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice.

SDBO applied the definition of a Priority Broadband Project by rigorously evaluating applications based on speed, latency, scalability, and long-term reliability, in alignment with the Infrastructure Act and the June 6 BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice.

All applications received met the minimum requirement for speed and general latency. In areas outside of the Black Hills in western South Dakota, all providers were determined to be providing priority broadband. However, in the Black Hills, SDBO conducted an in-depth review of the topography, foliage density, and line-of-sight barriers that impact service quality and determined that LEOS technology would not meet the definition of priority broadband in these areas.

Applications were assessed for future-proofing, network capacity, and geographic and demographic suitability. SDBO's six years of broadband deployment experience, including over 32,000 connected locations, informed its focus on harder-to-serve areas where reliable, scalable infrastructure is critical.

By applying these standards, SDBO ensured that selected projects met the definition of Priority Broadband Projects and supported the state's long-term connectivity, economic development, and quality of life goals.

SUBGRANTEE SELECTION CERTIFICATION (REQUIREMENT 13)

13.1 Text Box: Provide a narrative summary of how the Eligible Entity applied the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice's scoring criteria to each competitive project application and describe the weight assigned to each Secondary Criteria by the Eligible Entity. Scoring criteria must be applied consistent with the prioritization framework laid out in Section 3.4 of the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice.

South Dakota did not have any competing application proposals that met the required 15% cost difference that was laid out as secondary criteria in the June 6 BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION (EHP) DOCUMENTATION (REQUIREMENT 14)

14.1 Attachment (Required): Submit a document which includes the following: Description of how the Eligible Entity will comply with applicable environmental and historic preservation (EHP) requirements, including a brief description of the methodology used to evaluate the Eligible Entity's subgrantee projects and project activities against NTIA's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) guidance. The methodology must reference how the Eligible Entity will use NTIA's Environmental Screening and Permitting Tracking Tool

(ESAPTT) to create NEPA project records, evaluate the applicability of categorical exclusions, consider and document the presence (or absence) of Extraordinary Circumstances, and transmit information and draft NEPA documents to NTIA for review and approval.

Description of the Eligible Entity's plan to fulfill its obligations as a joint lead agency for NEPA under 42 U.S.C. 4336a, including its obligation to prepare or to supervise the preparation of all required environmental analyses and review documents.

Evaluation of the sufficiency of the environmental analysis for your state or territory that is contained in the relevant chapter of the FirstNet Regional Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS), available at <https://www.firstnet.gov/network/environmental-compliance/projects/regionalprogrammatic-environmental-impact-statements>.

Evaluation of whether all deployment related activities anticipated for projects within your state or territory are covered by the actions described in the relevant FirstNet Regional PEIS.

Description of the Eligible Entity's plan for applying specific award conditions or other strategies to ensure proper procedures and approvals are in place for disbursement of funds while projects await EHP clearances.

See Attachment at <https://sdgoed.com/partners/connectsd/bead/>

CONSENT FROM TRIBAL ENTITIES (REQUIREMENT 15)

15.1 Attachment(s) (Required if any deployment project is on Tribal Lands): Upload a Resolution of Consent from each Tribal Government (in PDF format) from which consent was obtained to deploy broadband on its Tribal Land. The Resolution(s) of Consent submitted by the Eligible Entity should include appropriate signatories and relevant context on the planned (f)(1) broadband deployment including the timeframe of the agreement. The Eligible Entity must include the name of the Resolution of Consent PDF in the Deployment Projects CSV file.

See Attachment at <https://sdgoed.com/partners/connectsd/bead/>

PROHIBITION ON EXCLUDING PROVIDER TYPES (REQUIREMENT 16)

16.1 Question (Y/N): Does the Eligible Entity certify that it did not exclude cooperatives, nonprofit organizations, public-private partnerships, private companies, public or private utilities, public utility districts, or local governments from eligibility for a BEAD subgrant, consistent with the requirement at 47 U.S.C. § 1702(h)(1)(A)(iii)?

Yes.

WAIVERS

17.1 Text Box: If any waivers are in process and/or approved as part of the BEAD Initial Proposal or at any point prior to the submission of the Final Proposal, list the applicable requirement(s) addressed by the waiver(s) and date(s) of submission. Changes to conform to the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice should be excluded. If not applicable to the Eligible Entity, note 'Not applicable.'

A waiver request is being submitted on behalf of two subgrantees to waive the 25% match requirement. The match will be 19% and 23% for these two projects.

17.2 Attachment (Optional): If not already submitted to NTIA, and the Eligible Entity needs to request a waiver for a BEAD program requirement, upload a completed Waiver Request Form here. If documentation is already in process or has been approved by NTIA, the Eligible Entity does NOT have to upload waiver documentation again.