

Commonwealth Connect

Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program

Final Proposal



commonwealth
connect



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Glenn Youngkin
Governor

August 29, 2025

The Honorable Howard Lutnick
Secretary of Commerce
United States Department of Commerce
Herbert C. Hoover Building
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Lutnick:

I am pleased to submit Virginia's Final Proposal under the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program for your review and approval. I want to commend you and your team for the reforms brought to the BEAD program, which have greatly enhanced the ability of states to efficiently identify and prioritize high-value broadband projects.

Virginia has undertaken an expedited and rigorous process to target unserved and underserved communities across our Commonwealth. Our approach leverages a diverse mix of technologies—including fiber, cable, fixed wireless, and low Earth orbit satellite—to ensure we meet the shared goal of universal broadband access. This strategic technology mix allows us to maximize impact and cost-effectiveness in areas where broadband has historically been unavailable or unreliable.

Questions have been raised about the Commonwealth's willingness to utilize low earth orbit satellite technology. I want to be very clear that we appreciate the improvement in the evaluation process that allowed us to use satellite technology at every location where it provided priority broadband service. We are confident that Virginia conducted a thorough application process with robust evaluation criteria, based on the providers' technical specifications which informed the viability of different solutions, to ensure that technologies funded are workable solutions for those at the lowest cost to the taxpayer.

Importantly, Virginia's efficient review process was strengthened by setting reasonable cost ceilings per location. This flexibility enabled us to optimize resources, and **the results will save taxpayers an additional \$203 million compared to former Biden-era results**, reinforcing our shared commitment to fiscal responsibility.

The Honorable Howard Lutnick
August 29, 2025
Page Two

As we submit this proposal, we look forward to continuing our close collaboration with your office on complementary BEAD non-deployment initiatives. These include expanding cellular coverage, improving connectivity in multi-dwelling units, and bolstering disaster preparedness connectivity.

Thank you for your leadership and partnership to close the digital divide in Virginia and across the nation.

If there are any questions about Virginia's Final Proposal, please contact our state authorized representative, Tamarah Holmes, Ph.D., Director of the Virginia Office of Broadband.

Sincerely,



Glenn Youngkin

Overview

The Commonwealth of Virginia has drafted the following Final Proposal, as required under the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD).

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

Table of Contents

Overview	1
Table of Contents	2
FINAL PROPOSAL DATA SUBMISSION.....	3
SUBGRANTEE SELECTION PROCESS OUTCOMES (REQUIREMENT 1).....	4
TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION (REQUIREMENT 3)	8
OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESSES (REQUIREMENT 4).....	9
LOCAL COORDINATION (REQUIREMENT 5)	10
CHALLENGE PROCESS RESULTS (REQUIREMENT 6).....	12
UNSERVED AND UNDERSERVED LOCATIONS (REQUIREMENT 7).....	12
IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF PLANS FOR COST AND BARRIER REDUCTION, COMPLIANCE WITH LABOR LAWS, LOW-COST PLANS, AND NETWORK RELIABILITY AND RESILIENCE (REQUIREMENT 11).....	14
SUBSTANTIATION OF PRIORITY BROADBAND PROJECTS (REQUIREMENT 12) ..	17
SUBGRANTEE SELECTION CERTIFICATION (REQUIREMENT 13).....	19
ENVIRONMENTAL AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION (EHP) DOCUMENTATION (REQUIREMENT 14)	21
CONSENT FROM TRIBAL ENTITIES (REQUIREMENT 15)	22
PROHIBITION ON EXCLUDING PROVIDER TYPES (REQUIREMENT 16).....	22
WAIVERS.....	22

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 Attachment at dhcd.virginia.gov/bead.

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

See Attachment at dhcd.virginia.gov/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 Attachment at dhcd.virginia.gov/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 Attachment at dhcd.virginia.gov/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)?

Yes.

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.

See Attachment at dhcd.virginia.gov/bead.

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.

The Commonwealth of Virginia's subgrantee selection process followed the process approved by NTIA in the approved Initial Proposal and modified as necessary to incorporate the BEAD June 6th, 2025, Restructuring Policy Notice. Following NTIA's BEAD June 6th Restructuring Policy Notice, Virginia's Office of Broadband (Office) issued a *Policy Notice on Benefit of the Bargain Round* on June 13th that provided guidance on eligibility requirements, evaluation criteria, and the required elimination of the certain regulatory requirements. This notice was compliant and outlined how the process would prioritize extending broadband access to unserved locations first, underserved locations second, and CAI's last.

The Office rescinded preliminary and provisional subaward selections made before June 6th and conducted a "Benefit of the Bargain" (BoB) subgrantee selection process for every BEAD-eligible location from June 26th through July 3rd. The BoB Round allowed applicants – regardless of technology employed or prior participation in the program – to compete on a level playing field. A Negotiation Cycle was then held July 16th to 26th to identify connectivity solutions for locations remaining in the initial cycle.

Eligible applicants were asked to submit letters of intent, followed by applications detailing their capacity and project plans. New applicants applied in Virginia's grants portal and previous applicants could send corrected submissions by email. A panel composed of representatives from the Virginia Office of Broadband and external contractors reviewed applications using the updated scoring rubric defined in the BEAD June 6th Restructuring Policy Notice, focusing on minimal BEAD Program Outlay and the outlined secondary criteria when applicable (outlined in Section 13.1). This process prioritized effective and cost-efficient broadband deployment and ensured compliance with the modified requirements.

Conducting the BoB Round allowed Virginia to reduce original deployment costs by \$200M in costs to the NTIA and thereby taxpayers compared to the original application process. All unserved, underserved, and Community Anchor Institution (CAI) locations will be provided with high-speed internet.



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.

To ensure a fair, open, and competitive application process, the Virginia Office of Broadband implemented an engagement and support framework tailored to applicants of all sizes and technology types. Applicants, including both small and large internet service providers (ISPs), and those using fiber, hybrid fiber coaxial, fixed wireless, and low Earth orbit (LEO) satellite technologies—were supported through multiple resources. This support and predictability allowed applicants to prepare strong, complete applications.

All applicable Virginia-specific regulations, including the Virginia Public Procurement Act (VPPA), were complied with throughout the public notice and application process. Specific subgrantee monitoring and compliance requirements will be incorporated into contracts to ensure accountability and alignment with state and federal standards.

The Office of Broadband took the following steps to ensure a **fair** process:

- Developed the BEAD Consolidated Application Guidance, which outlined the sections and scoring for each application requirement pre-restructuring.
- Implemented a multi-level review methodology, where each unique application material was evaluated by at least two reviewers using consistent scoring criteria.
- Conducted collaborative reviews to verify and validate results and logic.
- Trained reviewers on how to document their review findings and record scoring rationale using a standardized process and tool.
- Ensured that all applicants had the same opportunities to cure their applications by providing feedback and accepting responses within standardized time periods.
- Notified applicants of program changes following the June 6th BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice and prior to any further cycles of subgrantee selection by hosting a recorded webinar on June 25th, posting slides and the webinar recording on the DHCD BEAD website, and circulating the Office's June 13th Policy Notice on the BoB Round.

The Office of Broadband took the following steps to ensure an **open** process:

- Placed no additional restrictions on the types of applicants (traditional broadband providers, non-traditional broadband providers, etc.) that could apply for funding through the BEAD process, outside of the parameters defined in the approved Initial Proposal.
- Structured the application submission process to ensure that following the posting of Public Notices, all applicants could apply during the public dates posted. There was no variation in the timeline between applicants within the same cycle.
- Adopted a communication plan that engaged a wide variety of stakeholders.



- Upon the NTIA's release of the June 6th BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice, the Office notified newly eligible unlicensed fixed wireless (ULFW) providers via public posting of such information, released guidance on the BoB Round, and hosted a public, recorded webinar on June 25th, which was posted online with the webinar slides. Newly eligible ULFW providers were given the requisite 7-day window to submit claims and subsequently submit evidence that BEAD funding is not required for their service areas within 7 days of notification.

The following points outline the Office of Broadband's implementation of a **competitive** subgrantee selection process:

- Received applications from fiber-optic broadband providers, hybrid fiber coaxial broadband providers, licensed and unlicensed fixed wireless providers, and LEO satellite operators. Reflective of this engagement, each provider type was provisionally awarded locations through the BoB Round, demonstrating a competitive and neutral subgrantee selection process.
- Engaged in provider-specific outreach after the initial cycle of applications were submitted, with the goal of curing applications toward completion or compliance.
- Issued curing notifications in a timely manner, including detailed descriptions of the non-compliant response and remediation suggestions. The curing process requests were issued in alignment with the Policy Notice on the Office's Handling of Missing, Incomplete, or Non-Compliant Application Information, which was issued on November 1, 2024, and reinforced for the BoB round. Special care was taken to ensure timelines and requirements did not place additional burdens on small or non-traditional broadband providers, while keeping pace with required deadlines.
- Adopted the programmatic changes to application scope laid out in the June 6th BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice in a transparent, informative manner by providing technical assistance, hosting a live, recorded webinar on June 25th, which was posted along with DHCD's June 13th Policy Notice to the DHCD BEAD website at dhcd.virginia.gov/bead. The Office of Broadband also publicly posted FAQs for the BoB round. This process follows the commitments outlined in Virginia's approved Initial Proposal regarding programmatic changes.

The Office of Broadband implemented procedures to prohibit collusion or bias and maintain the integrity of the subgrantee selection process and established measures to verify that application reviewers were qualified, trained, and objective. An application scoring system based on quantitative analysis was used to minimize subjectivity. Managerial, technical, and operational capability were assessed by reviewers using a pass/fail system at the application area level, where satisfactory responses received full credit and non-satisfactory responses received no credit. This evaluation method aimed to provide a fair, open, and competitive process independent of subjective reviewer judgments.



The Office of Broadband staff, together with external contractors, assessed the technical, managerial, and operational qualifications of each applicant, following several criteria specified in Virginia's approved Initial Proposal in accordance with BEAD NOFO and June 6th Restructuring Policy Notice requirements. Training and standardized review materials were provided for all reviewers before and during the review process to promote consistency. Reviewers evaluated the same sections for all applicants rather than reviewing entire applications, which also helped reduce potential conflicts of interest, collusion, or bias. The Office of Broadband utilized the knowledge of its telecommunications engineers and former telecommunications industry staff members currently employed at the Office.

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 6th Restructuring Policy Notice, the Office of Broadband conducted a two-phased application process. The BoB Round included an Initial Cycle and Negotiation Cycle. In both cycles, the Office prioritized awards to Priority Broadband Projects as defined in Section 12.1 of this Final Proposal.

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.

The Office of Broadband did not revise the eligible CAI list for the BoB Round. The Office complied with the BEAD June 6th Restructuring Policy Notice by revising its application process to allow coverage of CAIs to be optional in subgrantee applications. This optionality permitted applicants to design efficient network applications that allowed connection of community anchors in the spirit of the program's efficiency goals.

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.

The Office of Broadband 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, Virginia's BEAD approved Initial Proposal Volume 2, and supplementary NTIA guidance. Further, the Office required that all applicants submit documentation that outlines their technical and operational capabilities to provide broadband service to any customer within the project area no later than 120 days prior to four years after the date on which the subgrantee executes the contract.

Required documentation included a comprehensive timeline and milestones for project implementation that outlined tasks, staff, subcontractor(s) responsible, collection of data, and estimated start and completion dates. Applicants also submitted a capital investment schedule to evidence complete build-out and initiation of service within 120 days prior to four years of the date on which the entity is under contract. The Office required all technical documentation to be certified by a professional engineer, stating that the proposed network can deliver broadband service that meets the requisite performance requirements to all locations that will be served by the Project. Additionally, the professional engineer was required to certify that the applicant is technically qualified to not only complete construction of the proposed network but also to successfully operate the network within the four-year period of performance.

Through subgrantee monitoring and oversight, as outlined in the BEAD Program Monitoring Plan, the Office will track project progress according to the timeline and milestones submitted in the application. The 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, the Office of Broadband 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.

200.344.

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 dhcd.virginia.gov/bead.



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

- a. 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;
- b. Compliance with obligations set forth in 2 C.F.R. Part 200 and the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions;
- c. 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;
- d. Subgrantee accountability practices that include distribution of funding to subgrantees for, at a minimum, all deployment projects on a reimbursable basis;
- e. 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);
- f. 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
- g. 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.

- a. The Virginia Office of Broadband conducted a 7-day public comment period, from August 6th to 13th, to allow stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback. The Office made the Final Proposal available for public comment through a public posting on their website and announcing the public comment period through various public channels. Comments could be provided by email until the publicized close date.
- b. The Commonwealth received a broad range of feedback from internet service providers (ISPs), local governments, advocacy organizations, labor unions, and individual



constituents. Many comments shared support for the Commonwealth's results, noting that selections appropriately reflect Virginia's geographic diversity and align with federal guidance on technology neutrality. Concerns were raised in the areas of LEO awards, location accuracy, the selection process, and contract updates. The Office reviewed and all comments and is confident of the Commonwealth's Final Proposal aligns with federal statute, state regulations, and programmatic policy issued by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). Consistent with this alignment, NTIA permitted the Commonwealth of Virginia to publish its Final Proposal for public comment based on successful completion of the Subgrantee Selection Monitoring (SAC) Meeting.

- ISPs and industry stakeholders sent comments on the BEAD template contract, including provisions related to termination, reporting, enforcement, and reimbursement. The Office will continue to work with providers to finalize the contract following submission of the Final Proposal.
- Concerns were shared about the inclusion of served locations and locations not requiring broadband service in the BEAD Final Proposal. The Office notes its compliance with the NTIA's June 6th Policy Notice and, in addition to this compliance, held a robust, crowdsourced de-obligation process to clearly identify served locations and locations not requiring broadband service. This crowdsourced list was published for reference by all applicants when preparing applications. To this end, the Final Proposal data submission files have been updated to list locations only once across the location-level data submission files.
- Constituents in rural communities expressed dissatisfaction that, despite having unprecedented federal investment in resilient and long-term broadband provision, their communities were awarded LEO service. Some shared that in their experience, LEO provides an unreliable and expensive service, a cycle they were hoping to break with BEAD and by receiving fiber service.
- Local governments expressed concern about the selection of providers not currently operating in or near their jurisdictions. These commenters questioned the feasibility of deployment plans from providers without an established presence in the community or existing service more generally, considering addressing outages, cost effective plans, and employing local residents.
- Applicants contested the results of the application process, questioning the Office's compliance with federal and state regulations and its methodology for selecting awards. The Office thoroughly reviewed its methodology against the language provided by the BEAD NOFO, June 6th Restructuring Policy Notice, and subsequent FAQ documents and determined that the process was compliant.



- Finally, comments voiced support for non-deployment activities with remaining funds including cellular infrastructure expansion, infrastructure upgrades in multi-dwelling units (MDUs), workforce development, and disaster relief connectivity. The Office remains committed to working with NTIA to support non-deployment programming.

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.

DHCD publicly posted the final location classifications at this site: [BEAD Application Areas - Dataset - Virginia Open Data Portal](#). The data files were updated on June 18, 2025.

UNSERVED AND UNDERSERVED LOCATIONS (REQUIREMENT 7)

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.

N/A

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.



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.

N/A

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.

The Commonwealth of Virginia is committed to improving broadband access and connectivity in the most efficient, cost-effective manner. The Virginia Office of Broadband outlined strategies to reduce costs and barriers to deployment in the approved Initial Proposal Volume II and revised as needed per the BEAD June 6th Restructuring Policy Notice. The following excerpts contain a summary and status update for those efforts.

Promoting the use of existing infrastructure:

The Office considers this initiative **Complete**. A robust and cost-effective solution for broadband access in unserved and underserved areas must leverage existing infrastructure. Virginia is fortunate to have a robust middle-mile broadband network, which applicants were incentivized to capitalize on per the application's requirement to prioritize cost efficiency. That approach, paired with the passing of legislation in 2021 that allows Virginia's investor-owned utilities (Appalachian Power and Dominion Energy) to partner with localities and broadband providers, reducing the cost for rural broadband development and enables any broadband provider to partner with utility middle-mile networks.

Promoting and adopting dig-once policies:

The Office considers this initiative **In Progress**, as its efforts to dig-once will continue throughout the lifetime of broadband deployment projects. Since the Commonwealth of Virginia



does not have a dig-once law, the Commonwealth utilizes other efforts to streamline the infrastructure development processes. For example, broadband providers are required to coordinate with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to place telecommunications infrastructure within the public right of way. With that in mind, VDOT hired a Broadband Infrastructure Coordinator to facilitate coordination and promote efficiency.

Streamlining permitting process:

The Office considers this initiative **In Progress**. The Office worked with local, state, and federal government partners to streamline the permitting process of broadband projects. The Office also leveraged the experience of its parent agency, the Department of Housing and Community Development, in navigating historical and environmental review requirements. Prospective subgrantees were provided with technical assistance (TA) on NEPA/NHPA compliance from the onset of the BEAD program, with specific processes and requirements highlighted in TA sessions in May and December of 2024, along with TA materials posted on the VA BEAD website. The Office of Broadband also engaged the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions to assist in the permitting process. Their involvement, primarily assisting broadband providers with permitting support, will continue until the necessary permits for project area awardees are secured.

Streamlining cost-effective access to poles, conduits, easements:

The Office considers this initiative **Complete**. The Office shared best practices from existing broadband development projects across the Commonwealth with stakeholders. Prospective subgrantees were encouraged to integrate and implement practices that streamline the deployment process, such as those outlined in Virginia's approved Initial Proposal Volume II. The Office emphasized the importance of cost-effectiveness in both the application scoring criteria and technical assistance.

Streamlining rights of way, including the imposition of reasonable access requirements:

The Office considers this initiative **In Progress**. VDOT is the primary party responsible for overseeing the installation of broadband facilities in the state right-of-way. Potential broadband providers must operate under a land use permit, obtained through the local VDOT land use office. VDOT oversees this process as well as compliance with Broadband Infrastructure Deployment rule § 645.307(a), which adds four new requirements to Section 607 of the MOBILE NOW Act. The Office of Broadband closely coordinates with VDOT land use offices to ensure the rights of way process is efficiently applied to BEAD projects. The Office of Broadband has included funding for two positions at VDOT to aid these efforts and streamline construction for broadband infrastructure expansion projects.



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.

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.

Overview

The Virginia Office of Broadband applied the BEAD June 6th Restructuring Policy Notice definition of *Priority Broadband Project*: one that provides broadband service at speeds of no less than 100 megabits per second for downloads and 20 megabits per second for uploads, has a latency less than or equal to 100 milliseconds, and can easily scale speeds over time to meet the evolving connectivity needs of households and businesses and support the deployment of 5G, successor wireless technologies, and other advanced services. This definition enabled Virginia to embrace technology neutrality and fully realize the benefit of the bargain.

Tailoring to Virginia's Needs

The Office applied a methodical evaluation process—assessing applications on speed, latency, and scalability—to certify the BoB Round supports current and future connectivity needs of Virginians.

As a result of the BoB Round, Virginia benefited from:

- \$200 million reduction in original deployment costs
- All Virginia BSLs served using all available technologies and recommended awards including fiber-optic, LEO satellite services, hybrid fiber-coaxial, and terrestrial fixed wireless technology.
- An updated infrastructure plan promoting long-term economic development for residents and businesses.
- Projects with proven capacity to meet today's demand challenges as well as easily scale for future needs of residents, thriving businesses and tourism.
- Technology-neutral solutions that perform at the required speeds across diverse terrain, including dense tree coverage, undulating slopes, and varying altitudes, to meet unique needs of each BSL.

Scalability of Priority Broadband Projects

The Priority Broadband Project definition considers **growth in demand** from today's baseline of 100/20 Mbps to what Virginia will need over the next decade to remain a place where people



live, work and raise a family. This accounts for demand trends over the last 10 years and considers what speeds would be needed to support Virginia's goals for a thriving residential and economic environment, private and public investment, building additional federal and military locations, supporting AI use, and bolstering precision agriculture. To qualify as a Priority Broadband Project, technologies must demonstrate **ease of scalability** to meet projected demand for current and future users.

Project area density impacts ease of scalability. In areas with high concentrations of homes businesses, and community anchor institutions, a BEAD Priority Broadband Project should demonstrate the ability to deliver at least 100/20 Mbps, minimal-latency service to all BSLs simultaneously upon deployment, while also needing to account for evolving technologies, 5G and future wireless advancements, and BSL bandwidth demand increases over time. To review a technology's **ability to scale**, the Office considered the currently served speeds of 100/20 Mbps, an application's stated network capacity, the project area's number of BSLs, the project area's geographic area, current customer base (if applicable), and future demand. For example, the existing customer base should not be negatively impacted by the award of BEAD locations for a given technology to be considered scalable.

Virginia also took into consideration the applicant's track record of meeting comparable levels of demand relative to the number of BSLs applied to. If a direct example could not be reviewed, the Office looked for examples of the applicants scaling their technology at the required pace. Finally, if the performance history did not have an example of the level of scale needed for the BEAD program, Virginia considered if future scalability would depend on emerging technologies. Emerging technology could require additional regulatory approvals, such as zoning, spectrum, or orbital clearances, which may introduce uncertainty. Additionally, technologies with shorter operational lifespans may pose replacement risks that could impact long-term reliability and cost-effectiveness.

Reliability of Priority Broadband Projects

Additionally, Virginia evaluated **reliability of projects** to apply the Priority Broadband Project definition based on the geography. Virginia's project areas span from mountains and hills to farmland and coastal plains. Through the Virginia Office of Broadband's past 8 years of experience in broadband infrastructure projects, past grant-funded implementations revealed that tree canopy, rugged terrain, and slope can complicate installation and/or obstruct line-of-sight (LOS) paths. Broadband technologies with obstructed line-of-sight, specifically wireless and LEO technologies, can have signal degradation, increased latency, and reduced reliability.

To apply a Priority Broadband Project definition from a reliability perspective, the Office looked at **topography** by evaluating the change in elevation between neighboring areas (i.e., calculated an average slope). A higher average slope indicates that there are various changes of terrain impacting technologies needing line-of-sight. Average slope was calculated using elevation



models from the US Geological Survey averaged per application area. Specifically, the Office applied analysis of average slope when reviewing wireless projects given past experience with State projects where varying slope impacted line-of-sight and service levels.

Besides elevation change, other common line-of-sight barriers are trees. Given approximately 63% of Virginia is forest, and applications referenced tree canopy coverage, the Office factored tree canopy coverage in the Priority Broadband Project application and reliability of wireless and LEO proposed projects. **Tree canopy** impacts the deployment of broadband technology requiring direct line-of-sight. LEO performance is more reliable with an unobstructed sky view, while fixed wireless signals degrade when traveling through vegetation. As discovered through the Virginia Office of Broadband's past 8 years of experience in broadband infrastructure projects, past infrastructure projects using state grant funds have struggled due to these line-of-sight limitations.

Initially, the Office assessed total canopy coverage per application area. However, this did not fully capture household-level variability, where technologies may work for some BSLs but not all depending on the amount of tree canopy around each BSL. So, the Office reviewed the percentage of BSLs within an application area that had over 50% tree canopy coverage. Implementing a more accurate view of where signal degradation is most likely to occur at the BSL level allows us to reliably serve the hardest to reach households.

This application of Priority Broadband Project definition allowed the state to fully implement a successful BoB Round.

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.

The Virginia Office of Broadband evaluated subgrantee applications according to the prioritization framework in Section 3.4 of the BEAD June 6th Restructuring Policy Notice. These criteria allowed the Office of Broadband to assess competing Priority Broadband Project applications (as defined in Section 12.1), as well as competing Non-Priority Broadband Project applications.

- a. **Primary Criteria — Minimal BEAD Program Outlay:** In deciding among competing applications covering the same general project areas, the Office of Broadband chose the option with the lowest cost based on minimal BEAD Program outlay. This was analyzed



on a requested subsidy per location basis as described in the BEAD June 6th Restructuring Policy Notice. The primary criteria allowed the Office of Broadband to prioritize the most cost-efficient and effective priority broadband projects for each location across the state.

- b. **Secondary Criteria:** If an application to serve the same general project area proposed a project cost within 15% of the lowest-cost application received for that same general project area on a per location basis, the Office evaluated such competing applications based on the following three criteria. Each of these criteria was assigned a number of points on a 100-point scale.

1. **Speed to Deployment: 25 Points.**

The prospective subgrantee must make a binding commitment to provide service by a specific date that is earlier than four years after receiving the subgrant from the Eligible Entity. The Office of Broadband considers the speed of deployment a key tenant of a successful BEAD program. Therefore, applicants that commit to deployment in 36 months or less will receive full credit under this section. The remaining scoring criteria are as follows: 20 Points for <38 months, 15 Points for <40 months, 10 Points for <42 months, 5 Points for <44 months, and 0 points for 44-48 months.

2. **Speed of Network and Other Technical Capabilities: 25 Points.**

As stated in the BEAD June 6th Restructuring Policy Notice, “Eligible Entities may weigh the speed, latency, and other technical capabilities of the technologies proposed by prospective subgrantees.” The Office of Broadband adopted the table below for evaluating applications for the purpose of this section.

Download Speed Range	Download Points	Upload Speed Range	Upload Points
= 100 Mbps	0	= 20 Mbps	0
> 100 Mbps, < 250 Mbps	5	> 100 Mbps, < 250 Mbps	3.33
> 250 Mbps, < 1 Gbps	10	> 250 Mbps, < 1 Gbps	6.67
> 1 Gbps	15	> 1 Gbps	10

3. **Preliminary/Provisional Subgrantees: 50 Points.**

As stated in the BEAD June 6th Restructuring Policy Notice, “for locations where Eligible Entities have already identified preliminary or provisionally selected subgrantees, Eligible Entities may give additional weight to those applications in the Benefit of the Bargain Round.” Applicants received 50 points if they were identified as the Provisional Subgrantee in an area of the first Initial Cycle of the Virginia Office of Broadband’s BEAD Application Process.



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 dhcd.virginia.gov/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.

No BEAD eligible locations exist within federally established tribal lands in Virginia.

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 2,236 locations that request a waiver for the 25% non-federal match requirement.



**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
Partners for Better Communities

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.

See Attachment at dhcd.virginia.gov/bead.