

What is BEAD?

The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment ([BEAD](#)) Program is a historic federal initiative aimed at closing the digital divide by investing in high-speed internet infrastructure across underserved and unserved areas of the United States. The Program was established under the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and administered by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

Oregon, through the [Oregon Broadband Office](#) (OBO), has been actively participating in this program, and the state is expected to receive nearly \$700 million dollars to expand broadband access—with a focus on rural, low-income, and tribal communities. The state opened BEAD Selection process in February 2025, with a pre-qualification phase. Entities that have pre-qualified are now eligible to apply for grants starting April 22, 2025 (and ending May 22, 2025).

BEAD Proposals

BEAD awards are made only at the geographic scale of school districts. This means that any BEAD application must deliver service to every unserved (> 25 mbps download and 3 mbps upload) or underserved (25 – 100 mbps download and 3-20 upload) location in each proposed school district. Applicants must make a separate application for every school district area. Geographic BEAD details can be observed on OBO's [Oregon Broadband Map](#).

Requested BEAD Application Letters of Support and Staff Recommendation:

Two individual Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are requesting a letters of support from the City. ISPs DFN and HYAK are both proposing BEAD projects in our school district, as well as in multiple other Lane County school district areas.

The BEAD program is competitive. It sets a high bar through its requirements and qualifications (including the rigorous pre-qualification process). There is a substantial amount of challenging permitting and construction work to accomplish in a short period of time with BEAD funded projects, so robust expectations are warranted. The City can endorse more than one application.

Staff note both ISPs are reputable and experienced, have already met OBO's robust BEAD pre-qualification standards, and will have to meet the BEAD program's (high) minimum standards for speed, service, technology, and affordability in their deployments.

All BEAD proposals represented by the attached letters of support are viable. It's meaningful for OBO to be able to more carefully consider the merits of each. LCOG staff recommend that cities sign both requested BEAD Application letters of support.

OBO's BEAD Proposal Scoring

OBO's pre-qualification process already established a "short-list" of viable BEAD applicants who have met standards related to:

- Organizational and Managerial Experience and Capacity
- Compliance requirements
- Project Staffing and Labor

- *Financial Capability (Including Match)*
- *Certifications*
- *Ownership Requirements*

The scoring phase will require that applicants to submit details about their specific project and will focus on the following scored elements:

Primary Scoring Criterion (all are mandatory under NTIA rules)	Points available
Minimal BEAD program outlay	40
Affordability	20
Fair labor practices	15
Primary Criteria subtotal	75
Secondary Criteria	
Speed to deployment (mandatory under NTIA rules)	2
Community/local government/tribal government support	10
Connecting CAIs	13
Secondary Criteria subtotal	25
Total	100

Local government support contributes 10 of 100 overall BEAD application points. This support can only be provided by what OBO defines as “units of government”: City, County, Tribal, School Districts, and Economic Development Districts. Applicants obtain the whole 10 points for securing 50% or more of these endorsements. Applicants obtain no points if they secure less than 50% of endorsements.

BEAD Benefits for Families, Students, and the Broader Community:

- Access to Education: Ensures that all students—regardless of ZIP code—have reliable internet for remote learning, homework, online testing, and educational enrichment.
- Affordable: Requires pricing packages that are affordable to a wider range of families.
- Parental Engagement: Allows parents to engage more fully with their children’s schools.
- Supports network upgrades in schools located in underserved areas, enabling access to modern digital tools and resources.
- Supports Remote & Hybrid Learning Models: Strengthens infrastructure needed to support blended instruction models and emergency learning transitions.
- Economic Development: Enables local businesses to compete in the digital economy and supports remote work opportunities.
- Healthcare Access: Facilitates telehealth services, especially vital for rural residents.
- Public Safety & Emergency Response: Enhances communication tools for first responders and emergency management systems.