



INTERNET FOR ALL WISCONSIN

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Grant Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Version: 1

Revised: 10/3/2024



Public Service Commission
of WISCONSIN





Contents

Challenge Process	3
Eligibility of Locations	3
Enforceable Funding Commitments	5
Project Units.....	6
Eligibility	8
Application Scoring and Minimum Criteria	8
Affordability and Low-Cost Service Plan.....	9
Engagement and Endorsement Scoring Criteria	10
Application Process	13
Grant agreement and Eligible Costs.....	13
Permitting and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Review	15

Contact: PSCBEADGrants@wisconsin.gov

Disclaimer: The guidance provided in this document is informational and cannot supersede Wisconsin or federal law, NTIA guidance, or the contents of the approved Initial Proposal. The Wisconsin Broadband Office reserves the right to modify this guidance as necessary to effectuate the goals of the BEAD program and remain compliant with NTIA requirements, including its Initial Proposal and any subsequent revisions.

Challenge Process

1. What are the results of the Broadband Equity, Access, And Deployment (BEAD) Program challenge process?

The complete list of location challenges received, and their adjudication can be downloaded here: <https://apps.psc.wi.gov/pages/viewdoc.htm?docid=515715> (opens an excel file)

The complete list of community anchor institution challenges received, and their adjudication can be downloaded here: <https://apps.psc.wi.gov/pages/viewdoc.htm?docid=515716> (opens an excel file).

2. Will there be another opportunity for challenging locations and/or service?

Consistent with National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) requirements, the challenge process determination is complete, and the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (Commission) will not hold another challenge process. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) continues to accept location and service challenges on a rolling basis, and these are used to conduct periodic refreshes to the [National Broadband Map](#).

Eligibility of Locations

3. What is a Broadband serviceable location (BSL)?

According to the FCC, a broadband serviceable location (BSL) is “a business or residential location in the United States at which mass-market fixed broadband Internet access service is, or can be, installed.”

For more information, see FCC’s help article [here](#).

4. What locations are eligible for BEAD funding?

BEAD eligible locations are any BSLs determined to be unserved or underserved per the approval of the BEAD Challenge process results by NTIA that are subsequently included in the final eligible list of locations.

Contact: PSCBEADGrants@wisconsin.gov

Disclaimer: The guidance provided in this document is informational and cannot supersede Wisconsin or federal law, NTIA guidance, or the contents of the approved Initial Proposal. The Wisconsin Broadband Office reserves the right to modify this guidance as necessary to effectuate the goals of the BEAD program and remain compliant with NTIA requirements, including its Initial Proposal and any subsequent revisions.

The Commission [has announced the preliminary determination of BEAD-eligible locations](#). The locations will be finalized following NTIA approval. Once approved by NTIA, the final eligible list of locations will be published to the docket 5-BCH-2024, accessible at the Commission’s website.

An [online map](#) is available to view these locations and the table below shows the preliminary count of BEAD eligible locations.

BEAD Eligibility Status	Count of BEAD-Eligible Locations
Unserved	98,685
Underserved	107,892
Total	206,577

[Docket 5-BCH-2024](#) also contains the preliminary determination of [BEAD-eligible CAIs](#), a [data dictionary](#), and a [summary of eligible locations by county](#).

5. What is a community anchor institution (CAI), and are they eligible for BEAD funding?

Informed by the definition of “community anchor institution” (CAI) in federal law, (47 USC 1702(a)(2)(e)), the Wisconsin Broadband Office (WBO) applied the definition of “community anchor institution” as: an entity such as a school, library, health clinic, health center, hospital or other medical facilities, public safety entity, institution of higher education, public housing organization (including any public housing agency or Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-assisted housing organization), or community support organization (CSO) that facilitates greater use of broadband service by vulnerable populations, including but not limited to low-income individuals, children, unemployed individuals, aged individuals, and incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. Please see the approved [Initial Proposal Volume 1](#) for details about each type of CAI.

CAIs lacking 1000/1000 Mbps symmetrical broadband service are eligible for BEAD funding, and they may be awarded funding by the Commission if funding remains after fulfilling the federal requirement to ensure all unserved and underserved BSLs in Wisconsin get service.

A list of community anchor institutions compiled as part of the BEAD Challenge Process can be found [here](#).

Contact: PSCBEADGrants@wisconsin.gov

Disclaimer: The guidance provided in this document is informational and cannot supersede Wisconsin or federal law, NTIA guidance, or the contents of the approved Initial Proposal. The Wisconsin Broadband Office reserves the right to modify this guidance as necessary to effectuate the goals of the BEAD program and remain compliant with NTIA requirements, including its Initial Proposal and any subsequent revisions.

6. What if a location is shown in the eligible locations list but is not actually a BSL?

With each iteration of data, the list of locations continues to become more accurate. However, errors remain. It is possible there are locations in the eligible locations list that are not BSLs and thus not eligible for funding, such as campsites, uninhabitable structures, haybales, or empty lots. Program participants are encouraged to identify such instances of incorrectly labeled locations and submit challenges to the FCC using the [fabric challenge process](#).

NTIA guidance is not yet available, but it is anticipated that WBO will be able to remove such “non-locations” from its grant awards and final list of funded locations.

7. What if a location is an entity that would not subscribe to mass market service because it would instead purchase enterprise-grade internet?

Unless an enterprise location is a Community Anchor Institution, it is not eligible for BEAD funding. Program participants are encouraged to identify instances of enterprise locations listed incorrectly as eligible and submit challenges to the FCC using the [fabric challenge process](#).

NTIA guidance is not yet available, but it is anticipated that WBO will be able to remove certain enterprise locations that are incorrectly labeled as eligible from its grant awards and final list of funded locations.

Enforceable Funding Commitments

8. What is an enforceable funding commitment (EFC)?

An enforceable funding commitment (EFC) for the deployment of qualifying broadband exists when the commitment to deploy such infrastructure was made as a condition of receipt of certain federal or state funding, including but not limited to [funding administered by the Commission](#), Federal Communications Commission, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, U.S. Department of Treasury, and U.S. Department of Agriculture. For a full list of programs establishing an enforceable funding commitment, see the [BEAD NOFO at footnote 52 on page 36](#).

EFCs may also include federal funding allocated by a local unit of government that is derived from federal State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds the local government received under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA). See [here](#) for more information on local government commitments.

Contact: PSCBEADGrants@wisconsin.gov

Disclaimer: The guidance provided in this document is informational and cannot supersede Wisconsin or federal law, NTIA guidance, or the contents of the approved Initial Proposal. The Wisconsin Broadband Office reserves the right to modify this guidance as necessary to effectuate the goals of the BEAD program and remain compliant with NTIA requirements, including its Initial Proposal and any subsequent revisions.

9. In the final eligible location list, my location was subject to an enforceable funding commitment (EFC) for an in-progress funding award. That award is no longer being constructed because the recipient has cancelled its project. Is this location eligible for BEAD?

According to guidance from NTIA, locations may not be added to the list of eligible locations after NTIA's final determination of eligible locations. If a location was subject to an EFC that has now been withdrawn or defaulted after the final eligible list was published, the location is not eligible for BEAD funding.

10. If there are new enforceable funding commitments (EFCs) for broadband projects that are established after September 1, should they still be submitted to the Wisconsin Broadband Office?

Yes, if new enforceable funding commitments for qualifying broadband service are established after September 1, 2024. The recipient should contact the WBO at PSCBEADGrants@wisconsin.gov for assistance on how to submit the information. EFCs submitted after September 1, 2024, will be addressed on a case-by-case basis depending on the timing of the BEAD process and the impacted locations.

Project Units

11. What is a project unit?

Project units are predetermined groups of locations eligible for BEAD funding. Applicants will submit applications for funding for one or more project units per application. To learn more about project units, refer to the Initial Proposal Volume 2 on the [BEAD Grant webpage](#).

12. When will project units become available?

Project units will be finalized after WBO receives final approval from NTIA of its list of locations eligible for BEAD. This list will determine the locations that will be assigned to Project Units. The [preliminary list of eligible locations](#) was submitted to NTIA on August 27, 2024, and has not yet been approved. The Commission may publish preliminary project units prior to finalizing the project units.

13. Is the Commission accepting public comments on project units?

No, the Commission is not accepting public comment on Project Units.

Contact: PSCBEADGrants@wisconsin.gov

Disclaimer: The guidance provided in this document is informational and cannot supersede Wisconsin or federal law, NTIA guidance, or the contents of the approved Initial Proposal. The Wisconsin Broadband Office reserves the right to modify this guidance as necessary to effectuate the goals of the BEAD program and remain compliant with NTIA requirements, including its Initial Proposal and any subsequent revisions.

14. What attributes are being used to create project units and will they cross county borders?

A single project unit will always be within a single county or Tribal Nation. Project units will also generally not traverse railroad lines, except in cases where this is unavoidable due to the proximity and density of railroads.

Within these boundaries, project units will group nearby locations with a strong consideration for deployment feasibility, particularly considering the proximity by road distance of locations.

15. What is the difference between a ‘separable’ and ‘non-separable’ project unit?

Applicants will submit applications containing groups of project units they propose to serve. An applicant will have the option of specifying a unit as non-separable, meaning that the applicant would not accept the awarded project if that unit were not included because it cannot feasibly undertake the project without serving those locations. Separable units represent additional locations that an applicant would be willing to take or leave, depending on the results of deconfliction of other neighboring applications.

16. How many project units can be included in an application?

There is no hard limit on the number of project units that can be included in an application, but a single application cannot have project units that traverse more than four adjacent counties.

17. Do project units submitted in a single application need to be adjacent to each other?

While project units will not necessarily border each other like a jigsaw puzzle because project units will only group eligible locations, project units submitted in a single application may not be proposed for more than four counties at a time, and those counties must be contiguous (sharing a border). For example, an application proposing project units in Polk County could also include units in Barron, St. Croix or Burnett, but not Dodge.

18. Can an application be submitted for a single project unit?

Yes.

Contact: PSCBEADGrants@wisconsin.gov

Disclaimer: The guidance provided in this document is informational and cannot supersede Wisconsin or federal law, NTIA guidance, or the contents of the approved Initial Proposal. The Wisconsin Broadband Office reserves the right to modify this guidance as necessary to effectuate the goals of the BEAD program and remain compliant with NTIA requirements, including its Initial Proposal and any subsequent revisions.

19. Is there a limit on the number of applications an eligible participant can submit?

There is no specific limit on the number of BEAD applications that can be submitted overall, though an eligible applicant may submit a maximum of two applications that contain the same project unit. When an eligible entity is approved to apply for BEAD, per the letter of intent they will have a maximum number of locations that they may apply for, unless they request a waiver.

Eligibility

20. How are eligible applicants determined for the BEAD sub-granting process?

Eligible applicants are those that meet the financial, managerial, operational, and technical requirements for participating in BEAD, as defined under the [BEAD Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) and approved Initial Proposal Volume 2. Applicants must have completed the Letter of Intent process consistent with the instructions posted [here](#) using the [PSC Grants System to be awarded](#). Further details and resources on the Letter of Intent and the Initial Proposal Volume 2 can be found on the [BEAD Grant Program webpage](#).

Application Scoring and Minimum Criteria

21. How is the scoring used in the BEAD Program sub granting process?

All applications will be scored. For project units with only one project proposal, the application must reach the minimum threshold of 40 points to be awarded funding. In the event two project proposals are competing for the same locations, score will be used to compare project proposals using the same technology type. Score is primarily used when there are competing proposals using the same technology type for the same geographic area. See [Initial Proposal Volume 2](#) starting at page 29 for complete scoring details.

22. Will all of the scoring criteria allow for partial points to be awarded based on how well the applicant's proposal meets the scoring criteria?

Some scoring criteria utilize a formula, others allow for partial points, and some only allow for all or no points for the specific scoring criteria. See [Initial Proposal Volume 2](#) starting at page 29 for complete scoring details.

Contact: PSCBEADGrants@wisconsin.gov

Disclaimer: The guidance provided in this document is informational and cannot supersede Wisconsin or federal law, NTIA guidance, or the contents of the approved Initial Proposal. The Wisconsin Broadband Office reserves the right to modify this guidance as necessary to effectuate the goals of the BEAD program and remain compliant with NTIA requirements, including its Initial Proposal and any subsequent revisions.

23. What is the BEAD Match Threshold?

A key requirement of the BEAD program is the threshold criteria that all applicants maximize the private share of funding allocated to a given project. Thus, the BEAD Match Threshold is the anticipated share of public BEAD grant funding that will be allocated for a given project unit, as a percentage of the total cost of that project unit.

Each project unit will be assigned a BEAD Match Threshold percentage, and applicants will need to submit applications that contain sufficient private match contributions to meet this ratio of public funding. If an application cannot meet the BEAD Match Threshold, it will be declined in the first round and forwarded to the next round.

See [Initial Proposal Volume 2](#) starting at page 28 for more detail on the BEAD Match Threshold.

Affordability and Low-Cost Service Plan

24. What are the criteria for the low-cost service plan?

In general, the low-cost service plan requires recipients of BEAD funding to offer a discounted rate of service to any ACP eligible households at a rate of no more than \$40 per month for a 100/20 Mbps plan.

The required low-cost plan applies only to locations receiving new or improved service as a result of BEAD funding i.e. locations in project units. All BEAD sub-recipients and any future owners of the facilities during the useful life of the network assets, will be contractually required to offer the low-cost service plan.

A complete description of the criteria for the low-cost service plan can be seen in [Initial Proposal Volume 2](#) starting at page 81.

25. What households will be eligible for the low-cost service plan?

Unless a successor program is established, eligibility will be the same as was used for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which includes households that have incomes at or below 200 percent of [federal poverty guidelines](#); participate in certain assistance programs, such as Lifeline, Medicaid, SNAP, federal public housing assistance, WIC, SSI, or Tribal specific programs; households with kids receiving free and reduced-price lunch or school breakfast; and Pell grant recipients.

Contact: PSCBEADGrants@wisconsin.gov

Disclaimer: The guidance provided in this document is informational and cannot supersede Wisconsin or federal law, NTIA guidance, or the contents of the approved Initial Proposal. The Wisconsin Broadband Office reserves the right to modify this guidance as necessary to effectuate the goals of the BEAD program and remain compliant with NTIA requirements, including its Initial Proposal and any subsequent revisions.

26. How will a recipient know if a household is eligible for the low-cost service plan?

If ACP or a successor program is not active when the BEAD networks are placed in service and thus unable to determine eligibility through the national verifier, providers will be required to participate in another forthcoming eligibility verification tool. Providers will not be required to develop their own verification methods.

Engagement and Endorsement Scoring Criteria

Note: the following questions summarize guidance also found in the [Engagement and Endorsement FAQ](#).

27. How many engagement points are available and what type of engagement is required?

Up to five points (of 100 total) are available for the support and engagement scoring criteria. See the [Engagement and Endorsement FAQ](#) for types of engagement and examples of documentation for each sub-category within this scoring criteria.

28. Will partial points be awarded for the subcategories of the engagement scoring criteria?

Yes, applicants may receive up to the total number of points available for each sub-category listed in the support and engagement table above depending on the quality of the engagement and the extent to which it is documented.

29. How is the scoring used in the BEAD Program sub granting process?

All applications will be scored. For project units with only one project proposal, the application must reach the minimum threshold of 40 points to be awarded funding in Round 1 or Round 2. In the event two project proposals are competing for the same locations, score will be used to compare project proposals using the same technology type. Score is primarily used when there are competing proposals using the same technology type for the same geographic area. (See Initial Proposal Volume 2 for complete scoring details.)

Contact: PSCBEADGrants@wisconsin.gov

Disclaimer: The guidance provided in this document is informational and cannot supersede Wisconsin or federal law, NTIA guidance, or the contents of the approved Initial Proposal. The Wisconsin Broadband Office reserves the right to modify this guidance as necessary to effectuate the goals of the BEAD program and remain compliant with NTIA requirements, including its Initial Proposal and any subsequent revisions.

30. Does an applicant need to provide evidence that shows engagement with all possible engagement stakeholders referenced in each sub-category? For example, if there are multiple municipal governments or school districts within an applicants proposed project area, must the applicant receive letters of support from all of them to be considered for the full point allotment for the respective sub-category?

Applicants are encouraged but not required to seek engagement with local government and key stakeholders. Higher points will be provided for engagement that demonstrates robust and representative sampling of the most impacted local governments, school districts, libraries, etc. In general, larger projects affecting a broad geographic area should expect to document more engagements and letters of support to earn higher points.

31. Is there a window of time in which the community engagement sessions must occur?

Community engagement must happen before an application for funding is submitted. Applications must document this community engagement activity(ies), which may happen as early as April 29, 2024, and through the application submission.

32. Should the letters of support be provided directly from the signatory to the Commission or included in the application?

Letters of support must be provided within the application submission and are due at the time of the application. Any letters submitted outside of the application system will not be considered.

33. Who should letters of support be addressed to?

Cru Stublely
Secretary to the Commission Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, Wisconsin 53705

34. How many endorsement criteria points are available and what type of endorsement is required?

Up to seven points (of 100 total) are available for endorsement from a County and/or Tribe. See the table above for documentation required for endorsement.

Contact: PSCBEADGrants@wisconsin.gov

Disclaimer: The guidance provided in this document is informational and cannot supersede Wisconsin or federal law, NTIA guidance, or the contents of the approved Initial Proposal. The Wisconsin Broadband Office reserves the right to modify this guidance as necessary to effectuate the goals of the BEAD program and remain compliant with NTIA requirements, including its Initial Proposal and any subsequent revisions.

35. Can endorsement authority be delegated to a broadband committee or an individual official of the county governmental body?

No. An endorsement must occur by an affirmative vote or official action of the representative body and cannot be delegated to individuals or appointed groups. For a county government, the endorsement must come from the county board.

36. If an applicant includes project units that span more than one county and/or Tribe in their application, how will points be awarded if the applicant only receives one endorsement from a county/Tribe, for example?

Points are assigned to each project unit individually. Thus, if a project receives endorsement from only some of the counties or Tribal lands it affects, points will be assigned solely to project units within that county's territory and/or that Tribal land. For an entire area to gain full points, an applicant would need to secure endorsement from all impacted counties and Tribal lands.

37. Can an entity (county/Tribe) endorse for specific geographic boundaries?

Yes. An endorsement may be provided based on the boundary of a political subdivision, such as specifying the BEAD applicant is endorsed for any BEAD broadband deployment within a specific township or municipal boundary. Alternatively, an endorsement may be provided for any application by the applicant within the entire county or Tribal Nation.

38. Can an entity (county/Tribe) endorse different applicants for different areas?

Yes. An endorsement may specify an applicant is endorsed for only a portion of its geographic area, as long as the boundary is clearly specified as one of the following: a group of project units, or a town, township, village, or city boundary.

39. Does an endorsement need to be solidified specifically through a resolution?

No, the official action does not need to be a resolution and can be a simple proposed action with a voice vote, for example. Documentation must clearly and affirmatively endorse the BEAD applicant and the documentation may specify a geographic boundary within the endorsement.

Contact: PSCBEADGrants@wisconsin.gov

Disclaimer: The guidance provided in this document is informational and cannot supersede Wisconsin or federal law, NTIA guidance, or the contents of the approved Initial Proposal. The Wisconsin Broadband Office reserves the right to modify this guidance as necessary to effectuate the goals of the BEAD program and remain compliant with NTIA requirements, including its Initial Proposal and any subsequent revisions.

Application Process

40. Will potential eligible applicants have the ability to correct and/or improve the letter of intent submission after the October 1, 2024, submission deadline?

An initial submission of the Letter of Intent was due October 1. Commission staff will review submissions and identify errors or omissions, which an applicant will be able to correct through a curing process that will extend for at least 30 days after the submission deadline.

41. Will potential applicants be notified of their letter of intent submission status on a rolling basis, or will all submitters be contacted after a specific date?

Potential applicants will be provided ongoing status updates related to their submitted LOI at the contact email provided with their application. Please contact PSCBEADGrants@wisconsin.gov for questions related to your Letter of Intent status. A determination of eligible participants and any conditions related to approved entities will be posted to the docket 5-BD-2025.

Grant agreement and Eligible Costs

42. Will this program be reimbursement based?

Yes. Applicants will be required to document costs incurred consistent with Commission reimbursement requirements, which specify costs must be allocable and directly attributable to the project. In addition to the actual costs along with supporting documentation, the subrecipient will be required to meet certain performance milestones to receive payment. Reimbursements will be available every six months for subrecipients with documented eligible costs who have also met their performance milestone(s).

43. Will the grant funds be Fixed Amount Subawards?

Yes, Wisconsin will issue fixed amount subawards and will use the NTIA guidance from the [Tailoring the Application of Uniform Guidance to the BEAD Program](#) policy notice. Wisconsin will require documentation and certain performance milestones be met to receive reimbursement.

44. When will BEAD costs become eligible for reimbursement?

The Commission is waiting for further guidance from NTIA regarding eligible costs and the performance period. Until further determination is made, it is recommended that

Contact: PSCBEADGrants@wisconsin.gov

Disclaimer: The guidance provided in this document is informational and cannot supersede Wisconsin or federal law, NTIA guidance, or the contents of the approved Initial Proposal. The Wisconsin Broadband Office reserves the right to modify this guidance as necessary to effectuate the goals of the BEAD program and remain compliant with NTIA requirements, including its Initial Proposal and any subsequent revisions.

prospective applicants begin documenting allocable, reasonable BEAD expenses effective August 1, 2024, the date the letter of intent process opened.

Until a grant award is approved by NTIA and a grant agreement is executed between the applicant and the Commission, all costs incurred are at the risk of the applicant. Further, there is no guarantee costs are eligible for reimbursement until they have been reviewed and approved by Commission staff based on the federal guidance.

45. Will a draft grant agreement be made available before the sub granting process begins?

Yes, a draft grant agreement will be made available on the BEAD grant webpage before the first application round opens.

46. Will awardees be required to pay prevailing wages and benefits to workers, including compliance with Davis-Bacon and Service Contract Act requirements?

No, per the approved Initial Proposal Volume 2, the WBO will not require awardees to pay federally-established prevailing wages and benefits or comply with “Davis-Bacon” requirements.

Awardees for projects over \$5,000,000 (based on expected total cost) will need to provide a certification that, for the relevant Project, all laborers and mechanics employed by contractors and subcontractors in the performance of such Project are paid wages at rates not less than those prevailing, as determined by the U.S. Secretary of Labor in accordance with subchapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40, United States Code (commonly known as the “Davis-Bacon Act”), for the corresponding classes of laborers and mechanics employed on projects of a character similar to the contract work in the civil subdivision of the State (or the District of Columbia) in which the work is to be performed, or by the appropriate State entity pursuant to a corollary State prevailing-wage-in-construction law (commonly known as “baby Davis-Bacon Acts”). If such certification is not provided, an awardee must provide a project employment and local impact report detailing:

- a. The number of contractors and subcontractors working on the Project;
- b. The number of workers on the Project hired directly and those hired through a third party;
- c. The wages and benefits of workers on the Project by classification; and
- d. Whether any of the reported wages are at rates less than those prevailing.

Contact: PSCBEADGrants@wisconsin.gov

Disclaimer: The guidance provided in this document is informational and cannot supersede Wisconsin or federal law, NTIA guidance, or the contents of the approved Initial Proposal. The Wisconsin Broadband Office reserves the right to modify this guidance as necessary to effectuate the goals of the BEAD program and remain compliant with NTIA requirements, including its Initial Proposal and any subsequent revisions.

47. How will awardees need to comply with Build America, Buy America (BABA) provisions?

A [waiver was approved](#) for recipients of BEAD funds. NTIA’s BABA waiver for the BEAD Program requires certain equipment be produced in the U.S., while waiving the domestic manufacturing requirement for other equipment. These BABA requirements will affect a range of stakeholders who will be responsible for demonstrating compliance and reporting. For more details see [NTIA’s Build America, Buy America](#) webpage.

The Department of Commerce (DOC) hosts a BEAD BABA ‘Self-Certification’ list, which manufacturers can, at the risk of penalty, certify that certain equipment they produce meets the domestic manufacturing requirements described in the BEAD BABA waiver. More information on the Self-Certification list can be found at that [Office of Acquisition Management Build America Buy America](#) page.

Permitting and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Review

48. Do all permitting requirements need to be completed when an application is submitted?

No, but applicants should be evaluating potential environmental and historical impacts and permitting jurisdictions before submitting applications to ensure they adequately budget for such costs as part of their proposed project. After awards are finalized and approved by NTIA, a comprehensive analysis of environmental impacts as required by NEPA must be conducted, along with a description of how the applicant will comply with requirements and obtain all permits and approvals. The NEPA process must be completed by the Commission and NTIA before construction of the project begins.

49. What role do state, county and local government have in helping with permitting for BEAD projects?

For projects in your area, state agencies and county and local governments can assist applicants by providing information about what permits will be required. Government officials can provide information on sensitive resources (wetlands, streams, endangered species, etc.) to the applicant. Government officials can also share publicly available mapping information to inform applicant’s decision making. While state government is responsible for much of the environmental permitting projects will require, applicants should also check with local and county governments about applicable permitting regulations.

Contact: PSCBEADGrants@wisconsin.gov

Disclaimer: The guidance provided in this document is informational and cannot supersede Wisconsin or federal law, NTIA guidance, or the contents of the approved Initial Proposal. The Wisconsin Broadband Office reserves the right to modify this guidance as necessary to effectuate the goals of the BEAD program and remain compliant with NTIA requirements, including its Initial Proposal and any subsequent revisions.

50. NEPA review can be a time-consuming process. How are NTIA and the PSC working to address this known barrier?

NTIA has provided resources for potential applicants which can you find here:

<https://broadbandusa.ntia.gov/assistance/permitting>

Particularly helpful for planning stages is [the Permitting and Environmental Mapping Tool](#), designed to help federal broadband grant recipients and subgrantees identify and understand the types of permits they will need and plan routes for their potential broadband deployments.

NTIA has also announced a set of broadband-specific categorical exclusions that may apply to certain projects, reducing the review time needed. See the [Guidance on NTIA National Environmental Policy Act Compliance document](#) for more details.

NTIA has made the Commission a joint lead agency for NEPA reviews, meaning that the Commission has hired dedicated staff to perform NEPA reviews, and prepare NEPA documents before submitting them to NTIA for review and approval.

The Commission continues to seek guidance from NTIA as it works to further develop processes for federal NEPA reviews. If you have additional questions, please email: PSCBEADGrants@wisconsin.gov.

Contact: PSCBEADGrants@wisconsin.gov

Disclaimer: The guidance provided in this document is informational and cannot supersede Wisconsin or federal law, NTIA guidance, or the contents of the approved Initial Proposal. The Wisconsin Broadband Office reserves the right to modify this guidance as necessary to effectuate the goals of the BEAD program and remain compliant with NTIA requirements, including its Initial Proposal and any subsequent revisions.