

**Georgia Technology Authority (GTA)**  
**Georgia Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Grant Program**  
**Notice of Funding Opportunity**  
**November 19, 2024**

**DISCLAIMER**

**This Notice of Funding Opportunity (“NOFO”) is intended to be a guide to the application process for prospective applicants applying for consideration of funding through the Georgia Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment Grant Program (“BEAD Grant Program”). This guidance is not exhaustive, binding, or final.**

**I. OVERVIEW**

The Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget (“OPB”) and Georgia Technology Authority (“GTA”) hereby notify interested applicants of the opportunity of funds allocated for the Georgia Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment Grant Program (“BEAD Grant Program”). The availability and use of these funds is subject to all applicable State and Federal laws including guidance from the U.S. Department of Commerce National Telecommunications and Information Administration (“NTIA”) regarding the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Fund (“BEAD”) authorized by the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, Division F, Title I, Section 60102, Public Law 117-58, 135 Stat. 429](#) (November 15, 2021) (Infrastructure Act or Act). The State is facilitating the distribution of its allotted BEAD funding through the BEAD Grant Program which has been designed in accordance with [NTIA’s BEAD Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) released on May 13, 2022. Supplementary guidance may be published at any time by NTIA and/or the State.

As it did in 2022 with its successful Capital Project Fund (CPF) grant program, Georgia anticipates offering applicants the opportunity to apply for project areas at the county level, such that all applications will be required to propose to build to unserved and underserved addresses countywide (each county and its eligible locations will hereinafter be referred to as “County Grant Area”).

This approach is designed to enable efficient application review with minimal application overlap or need for deconfliction. Additionally, this approach is designed to enable participation by applicants of all sizes, given that many of Georgia’s counties are small relative to most states and their size should not pose a barrier to participation by smaller entities.

Consistent with NTIA’s requirements, GTA anticipates a focus and prioritization of its grant program on fiber. Georgia seeks to maximize the use of its BEAD allocation to fund fiber-to-the-premises, reflecting the State’s commitment to deploying best-in-class, future-proof broadband infrastructure wherever possible and to the greatest extent possible. Given the State of Georgia’s preference for fiber-to-the-premises, GTA intends to limit its first round BEAD grant process to fiber only applications and to award BEAD funds to applicants based on a scoring matrix that prioritizes low cost, as well as, other public policy priorities, consistent with NTIA rules.

GTA intends that its grant program will result in new broadband coverage and service to 100 percent of eligible unserved and as many underserved locations as funding allows. The grant program is designed to maximize the potential to deliver fiber-to-the-premises to most of these locations. Additional grant rounds, if necessary, will accept applications for other reliable and alternative technologies for any remaining locations for which fiber-to-the-premises is cost prohibitive given the available funds.

## **II. APPLICATION ASSISTANCE**

Potential applicants may reach out to the Georgia Broadband Team at [broadband@gta.ga.gov](mailto:broadband@gta.ga.gov) with any questions.

## **III. FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR AWARD**

The State of Georgia was allocated \$1.3 billion in grant funds from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. These dollars will be used to support broadband grants to serve remaining eligible unserved and underserved locations in Georgia. The State reserves the right to fund, in whole or in part, any, all, or none of the applications submitted in response to this NOFO.

## **IV. ELIGIBLE PROJECT AREAS**

Applicants will have the opportunity to apply for project areas at the county level. Each county and its eligible locations will hereinafter be referred to as "County Grant Area." Potential applicants can download eligible locations from the State's website at <https://broadband.georgia.gov/bead-grant-applications>.

## **V. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

Eligible applicants include private companies, cooperatives, nonprofit organizations, public-private partnerships, local governments, public utilities, private utilities, public utility districts, or other internet service providers (ISPs). Partnerships and consortium applications will be allowed (e.g., two providers partnering to serve an eligible County Grant Area).

## **VI. SCORING CRITERIA**

Criteria for scoring is outlined in Georgia's Initial Proposal Volume II (IPV2). Additional clarification regarding scoring can be found within the State's BEAD FAQs [here](#).

## **VII. MATCHING FUNDS**

All Georgia BEAD subrecipients will must comply with the requirements for matching funds that are mandated by the language of the statute and NTIA's rules (Section III.B). These requirements are for a minimum 25 percent match for all locations other than those that exceed the Extreme High Cost Per Location Threshold set by the State.

## **VIII. PARTICIPATION IN THE AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM**

All Georgia BEAD subrecipients will be required to participate in the Affordable Connectivity Program or any successor program if it is established.

## **IX. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE**

As established in Section 60102(h)(4)(C) of the Infrastructure Act, subrecipients that receive BEAD Program funds for network deployment must deploy the planned broadband network and 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 subrecipient is awarded the subgrant from the Eligible Entity.

#### **X. ELIGIBLE PROJECT COSTS**

Allowable costs are determined in accordance with the cost principles identified in [2 C.F.R. Part 200, Subpart E](#). In addition, costs must be reasonable, necessary, allocable, and allowable for the proposed project or other eligible activity and conform to generally accepted accounting principles. Funds committed to an award may only be used to cover allowable costs incurred during the period of performance, except for reasonable and allowable pre-award expenses, and for allowable closeout costs incurred during the grant closeout process.

#### **XI. TENTATIVE GRANT PROGRAM TIMELINE**

November 19, 2024: NOFO Released

November 19, 2024: Kickoff Webinar 10:00-11:00 AM EST

December 2, 2024: Application Window Opens

January 15, 2024: Applications Due by 5:00 PM EST

Spring 2025: Final Recommendations and Preliminary Awards Announced to Awardees for Round 1

#### **XII. APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS**

All applications will be reviewed for eligibility and completeness and then evaluated based on the priorities and criteria identified herein.

#### **XIII. APPLICATION AWARD AND NOTIFICATION**

All applications will be reviewed and evaluated according to the scoring criteria, priorities, and preferences outlined in this NOFO and Georgia's Initial Proposal Volume II. Applicants will be notified in writing of preliminary and/or final awards based on their ability to meet all criteria of the program.

#### **XIV. GRANT AGREEMENT AND TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

An applicant selected for funding through the BEAD Grant Program that wishes to accept this award must execute the preliminary and final BEAD Grant Program Terms and Conditions within 14 business days and meet all criteria of the BEAD program prior to execution of the agreement. The State will not accept proposed changes or amendments to the Terms and Conditions. Failure or refusal to comply with this requirement will result in award offers being rescinded.

#### **XV. COMPLIANCE WITH OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, including 2 C.F.R. Part 200 apply to the BEAD awarded projects, except for any provisions that NTIA may determine are inapplicable to an award. Each award is further subject to such exceptions as may be otherwise provided by NTIA. Applicants should review and understand all applicable requirements to ensure compliance throughout the award period. All awardees will be monitored for compliance with the requirements of the program to include applicable policy requirements, and federal and state laws and regulations.

Projects funded by BEAD Funds must comply with all applicable Federal laws and regulations, and with all requirements for State, local, and Tribal laws and ordinances to the extent that such requirements do not conflict with Federal laws.

BEAD funded projects should incorporate strong labor standards, including project labor agreements and community benefits agreements that offer wages at or above the prevailing rate and include local hire provisions, not only to promote effective and efficient delivery of high-quality infrastructure projects but also to support the economic recovery through strong employment opportunities for workers. Using these practices in construction projects may help to ensure a reliable supply of skilled labor that would minimize disruptions, such as those associated with labor disputes or workplace injuries.

NTIA further encourages prioritization of employers (including contractors and subcontractors) without recent violations of Federal and State labor and employment laws as a further measure that may minimize project disruptions and delays.

Among other requirements contained in [2 C.F.R. 200, Appendix II](#), all contracts made by a Subrecipient in excess of \$100,000 that involve employment of mechanics or laborers must include a provision for compliance with certain provisions of the [Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act, 40 U.S.C. 3702 and 3704](#), as supplemented by Department of Labor regulations ([29 C.F.R. Part 5](#)).

Projects funded by BEAD Funds must comply with all applicable Federal and State environmental laws.

#### **XVI. REPORTING**

Subrecipients awarded funding through the BEAD Grant Program will be subject to all reporting requirements as set forth by the State and NTIA.

#### **XVII. OVERSIGHT**

Subrecipients awarded funding through the BEAD Grant Program will be subject to audit or review by U.S. Department of Commerce, NTIA, OPB, GTA, or any representative of named agencies.