gta | GEORGIA
TECHNOLOGY
AUTHORITY

OUR VISION

A transparent, integrated enterprise where technology decisions are made with the citizen in mind

—

OUR MISSION

To provide technology leadership to the state of Georgia for sound IT enterprise management

Georgia BEAD Webinar

Dec 2024

Georgia's BEAD Allocation

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program

- $42.45 billion to expand high-speed internet access by funding planning, infrastructure deployment, and adoption programs in all 50 states and territories

- Georgia Allotment: $1,307,214,371.30

- BEAD Planning Funds: $4,999,994.65

Overview of the BEAD Program

- In June 2023, Georgia was allocated $1.3 billion of federal BEAD funds that will become available following completion of the federal planning cycle.

- Funds are prioritized for *unserved* locations (those that cannot get internet service of 25/3 Mbps) first and *underserved* locations (those that can get internet service between 25/3 and 100/20 Mbps only) second.

- GTA has submitted three BEAD plans to the federal government: 5 Year Action Plan, Initial Proposal Volume I, & Initial Proposal Volume II.

Planning	Provisional Grant Program	Projects Begin
2023	**2024/2025**	**Upon Final Proposal Approval**

BEAD Eligible Locations

- Based on Georgia's validated Challenge Process Data, the following locations will be BEAD eligible:

  - 71,776 unserved locations

  - 93,298 underserved locations

    - Total: 165,074

  - 3,638,216 served locations in Georgia

  - Locations are available at broadband.georgia.gov

Initial Proposal Volume II

Volume II addresses 16 federal requirements, of which these are four critical elements

Grant program structure

Describes how GTA plans to structure and manage the grant program, including how grant funding areas will be determined

Scoring criteria

Describes how GTA plans to award points for each application, based on federal requirements for scoring and the state's priorities

Mandatory low-cost service offering

Describes how GTA plans to require awardees to comply with the federal requirement that all awardees offer a low-cost option to low-income households

Application requirements

Describes the information and certifications that GTA will require in all applications, to align with both federal and state requirements

GTA's proposed grant structure

1
Application preparation

- Applicants select the County Grant Area that they want to serve
- Applicants will be required to propose a cost to build broadband to unserved and underserved locations in that County Grant Area
- Applicants may exclude very high-cost locations

2
Scoring

- GTA will score all applications based on the relevant scoring rubric

3
"Extremely High Cost Per Location Threshold"

- GTA will set the Extremely High-Cost per Location Threshold to determine the cost at which other technology types make more sense than fiber based on Round 1 data

4
Negotiation

- GTA will solicit proposals for County Grant Areas that did not receive a proposal
- GTA will also solicit revised pricing for proposals that exceed the EHCPLT

5
Provisional awards

- OPB will provisionally award projects
- GTA will prepare the Final Proposal to NTIA to seek approval of the provisional awards
- The Final Proposal will be released for public comment for 30 days before submission to NTIA

County Grant Areas

1

Federal rules allow states to design grant areas themselves or enable applicants to propose their own grant areas.

2

Based on IPV2, the State will require applicants to submit applications based on county boundaries. The county approach is intended to reduce overlap and reduce cherry picking.

Applicants will be permitted to identify locations that are so costly to build that they propose to exclude them - but would be cautioned that excessive exclusions could lead to disqualification.

Priority Project Scoring Rubric

Scoring Criteria	Points available
Primary Criteria (all are mandatory under NTIA rules)	
Total outlay of funds	50
Lowest price 1 Gbps/ 1 Gbps service commitment	15
Compliance with federal fair labor laws	10
Primary Criteria subtotal	75
Secondary Criteria	
Speed to deployment (mandatory under NTIA rules)	5
Community/local government support	9
Community Anchor Institutions	3
Universality of Applications	8
Secondary Criteria subtotal	25
Total	100

Other Last-Mile Broadband Deployment Project Scoring Rubric

Scoring Criteria	Points available
Primary Criteria (all are mandatory under NTIA rules)	
Total outlay of funds	50
Lowest price 1 Gbps/ 1 Gbps service commitment	15
Compliance with federal fair labor laws	10
Primary Criteria subtotal	75
Secondary Criteria	
Speed to deployment (mandatory under NTIA rules)	5
Community/local government support	9
Community Anchor Institutions	3
Speed of network and other technical capabilities (mandatory under NTIA rules)	8
Secondary Criteria subtotal	25
Total	100

Documents Online

Georgia Broadband Program

BEAD Grant Application Portal Now Open

To access the portal, please sign up or login on the portal website

BEAD Grant Applications

This list is a draft of BEAD application questions to assist potential applicants and is subject to change. GTA encourages interested applicants to review the list of questions prior to the opening of the BEAD application window later this year. Potential applicants are also encouraged to contact the Georgia Broadband Team with any questions at broadband@gta.ga.gov.

View draft templates found on the BEAD application

BEAD Timeline

NTIA Location Removal 1.1 Guidance

GTA Non-Service Template

BEAD Application Materials

These documents are meant to provide support to prospective applicants while they are completing their respective BEAD Applications.

File
Georgia BEAD Notice of Funding Opportunity
BEAD Technical Assistance Manual November 19, 2024
Cybersecurity and Supply Chain Risk Management Checklist

Every BSL in the "No BEAD Locations" CSV file must have a reason code that explains why the location will not be served by a BEAD project and substantial evidence to support the reason code.

The list of reason codes that Eligible Entities may select in the No BEAD Locations file includes:

1 — No Broadband Connection
Location should not have a broadband connection (for example: barn, hay bale, or rock)

2 — No Demand for Mass-Market Broadband Service
Location does not need mass-market broadband service due to the nature of internet use

3 — Removal from FCC's Fabric
Location has been removed from the latest version of the Fabric by the FCC

4 — Enforceable Commitment
Location will be served through an enforceable commitment

5 — Served by Non-Subsidized Service
Location is already served by non-subsidized service

6 — Other Reasons
...reason...not...

7 — ...
...ligible Entity...ncially incapable of serving an underserved location

Key:

🔴 *Reason codes with sub-codes*

🗺️ *EEs must file an FCC Location Challenge prior to FP submission*

DRAFT | BEAD PRE-DECISIONAL
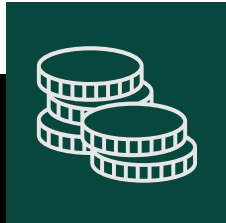
BEAD Requirements

BEAD requirements differ from many of the previously funded broadband programs. To assist potential applicants the State will provide technical assistance. The list below highlights several key application areas to note:

- Budget
- Eligible Expenses
- Match Funds
- Letter of Credit / Performance Bonds
- Cybersecurity and Supply Chain Risk Management
- Monitoring and Compliance
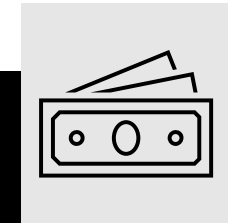- Payment Structure
- Reporting

Budget

Pre-award expenses should be clearly identified as such in the proposed budget.

Please note that applicants assume the responsibility of any pre-award costs in the event they do not win an award.

GTA will allow limited permissible activities under NEPA to proceed using award funds prior to the completion of the EHP review process.

Account for all applicable cost categories in your budget.

Be thorough!

Eligible Expenses

Grant recipients may only use federal award funds, and any non-federal cost share committed to an award to pay for allowable costs under the BEAD Program. 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 pre-award expenses as described above, and for allowable closeout costs incurred during the grant closeout process.

Eligible uses of funding in connection with last-mile broadband deployment projects include the following:

1. Construction, improvement, and/or acquisition of facilities and telecommunications equipment required to provide qualifying broadband service, including infrastructure for backhaul, middle- and last-mile networks, and multi-tenant buildings.
2. Long-term leases (for terms greater than one year) of facilities required to provide qualifying broadband service, including indefeasible right-of-use (IRU) agreements.
3. Deployment of internet and Wi-Fi infrastructure within an eligible multi-family residential building.
4. Engineering design, permitting, and work related to environmental, historical and cultural reviews.
5. Personnel costs, including salaries and fringe benefits for staff and consultants providing services directly connected to the implementation of the BEAD Program (such as project managers, program directors, and subject matter experts).
6. Network software upgrades, including, but not limited to, cybersecurity solutions.
7. Training for cybersecurity professionals who will be working on BEAD-funded networks.
8. Workforce development, including Registered Apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships, and community college and/or vocational training for broadband-related occupations to support deployment, maintenance, and upgrades.

Limited Permissible Activities

Georgia's BEAD program intends to fund a wide range of broadband activities. With regard to last-mile broadband deployment projects, GTA will align to the eligible use of funding outlined below.

Implementation activities (site preparation, demolition, construction, ground disturbance, fixed installation, or any other implementation activities) may not begin prior to the completion of all EHP requirements as outlined in this Section.

Based on the guidelines outlined by the NTIA, GTA will allow limited permissible activities under NEPA to proceed using award funds prior to the completion of the EHP review process, including the following:

1. Pre-construction planning, including collecting information necessary to complete environmental reviews;
2. Applications for environmental permits;
3. Studies including, but not limited to, Environmental Assessments (EA), wetland delineations, biological assessments, archaeological surveys, and other environmental reviews and analyses;
4. Administrative costs;
5. Pre-award application costs;
6. Activities supporting consultations required under the NHPA, the Endangered Species Act, and the Clean Water Act; and/or
7. Limited, preliminary procurement, including the purchase or lease of equipment, or entering into binding contracts to do so; the purchase of applicable or conditional insurance; and/or funds used to secure land or building leases (including right-of-way easements).

Subrecipients that undertake unauthorized project activities in contravention of this information proceed at their own risk and may face de-obligation of funding. Furthermore, subrecipients that incur costs prior to execution of final award agreement proceed at their own risk and may face rejection if deemed unallowable.

Eligible Sources of Match

Funds from other federal generally may not be used as matching funds. However, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act expressly provides that matching funds for the BEAD Program may come from a federal regional commission or authority or from funds, to the extent permitted by law, that were provided to an Eligible Entity or a subgrantee for the purpose of deploying broadband service under:

$ The Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020;

    The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Secure (CARES) Act of 2020;

    The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 or;

    The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

    Loan funding issued through a federal agency, such as through the USDA ReConnect Program, may also be used as match funding.

In-Kind Match

What is an in-kind match?

In-kind matches, also known as in-kind contributions, are non-cash donations of property, goods, or services which benefit a federally assisted project, and may count toward satisfying the non-federal matching requirement of a project's total budgeted costs when such contributions meet certain criteria. In-kind contributions must be allowable and allocable project expenses and may come from a third party

GTA is required to maintain thorough documentation to justify the valuation of any in-kind property and services contributed toward meeting BEAD's matching requirements, so prospective subrecipients will need to provide support. This documentation must clearly show how the assigned value was determined. Records should include details on the contribution, the valuation method used, and the donation terms to support the amount claimed as matching funds for the project.

Additionally, the contribution should be both relevant and necessary for the project. The valuation methodology and supporting documentation should reflect actual market conditions.

Letter of Credit / Performance Bonds

During the application period, applicants will be:

- Required to certify that their organization is aware of and understands the letter of credit/performance bond obligation, as outlined in NTIA's BEAD NOFO.

- Required to advise if they will be utilizing a Letter Of Credit or Performance Bond.

Letter of Credit / Performance Bonds

GTA will make preliminary awards which are subject to NTIA's final review and approval. Prior to entering into any agreement, prospective subrecipients must complete the following:

If utilizing a Letter Of Credit, subrecipients must provide an irrevocable standby letter of credit in the required form, acceptable in all respects to the State, in a value of no less than 25% of the subaward amount. In addition, a subrecipient must provide the State an opinion letter from legal counsel stating that in a proceeding under the Bankruptcy Code the bankruptcy court would not treat the letter of credit as property of the winning subgrantee's bankruptcy estate.

If utilizing a Performance Bond, subrecipients shall obtain a letter from a company holding a certificate of authority as an acceptable surety on federal bonds as identified in the Department of Treasury Circular 570 committing to issue a performance bond to the prospective subrecipient. The letter shall at a minimum provide the dollar amount of the performance bond. The performance bond must be acceptable in all respects to the State and in a value of no less than 100 percent of the subaward amount.

Cybersecurity and Supply Chain Risk Management

Cybersecurity Risk Management Plan

Prospective subrecipients must prepare a cybersecurity risk management plan and have the plan in place **prior to award of the grant** if the subrecipient is providing service to the area already; or the prospective subrecipient must demonstrate that **it is ready to be operationalized upon providing service** if it is not yet providing service prior to the grant award. The plan:

- Must reflect the latest version of the National Institute of Standards and Technology Framework for Improving Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity and the standards and controls set forth in Executive Order 14028 and specifies the security and privacy controls being implemented
- Be submitted to GTA prior to the allocation of funds
- If the subrecipient makes any substantive changes to the plan, a new version will be submitted within 30 days

Cyber Supply Chain Risk Management Plan

Must be in place **prior to award of the grant** if the subrecipient is providing service to the area already; or the prospective subrecipient must demonstrate **that it is ready to be operationalized upon providing service**. Supply Chain Risk Management plans must meet the following requirements:

- Be based on key practices discussed in NISTIR 8276 "Key Practices in Cyber Supply Chain Risk Management: Observations from Industry"
- Be based on related SCRM guidance from NIST 800-161 "Cybersecurity Supply Chain Risk Management Practices for Systems and Organizations"
- Specify the controls to be implemented

Monitoring and Compliance

Requirement: Throughout the BEAD Program, NTIA will conduct ongoing monitoring of an Eligible Entity's progress against its plans and ensure that the requirements of the Infrastructure Act are met. Eligible Entities will be required to comply with reporting requirements and monitor subgrantee compliance.

Expectations: Subrecipients can expect a thorough and structured monitoring process aimed at ensuring compliance with all relevant policies and regulations. This includes regular reviews of financial and programmatic performance, with methods such as on-site visits, desk reviews, and self-assessments. Subrecipients should be prepared to provide comprehensive and accurate documentation, including financial records, detailed expenditure reports, and proof of compliance with program guidelines. Additionally, they may need to share their internal policies and procedures, demonstrate their internal controls, and participate in discussions with monitoring staff to clarify practices and address any potential compliance issues.

Monitoring and Compliance

Cooperation with Monitoring, Audits, Records Requirements, Assessments and Evaluations

All records and expenditures are subject to, and the Grantee agrees to comply with, monitoring, examinations, demand for documents, production of personnel, access to systems, and/or audits conducted by any and all federal or state officials and auditors, including but not limited to, the U.S. Department of the Treasury Inspector General, OPB, the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts, the State of Georgia Inspector General, and the Department of Community Affairs, or their duly authorized representatives or designees. The Grantee shall maintain, under GAAP or GASB, adequate records that enable federal and state officials and auditors to ensure proper accounting for all costs, reimbursement, and performances related to this Grant Agreement. Records and expenditures may be requested of Grantee at any time. Grantee shall provide requested records and expenditures within ten (10) business days of the date of request. Failure to comply with the terms of this subsection may result in termination of the grant and recoupment of distributed funds.
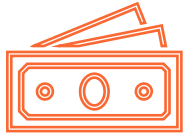
Payment Structure

The State will utilize a fixed subaward structure with a performance-based method of repayment similar to its SLFRF and CPF repayment. Subrecipients under this fixed amount subaward are not required to comply with the cost principles under the Uniform Guidance pursuant to NTIA's policy update. Awardees will be able to receive a minimum of 10% percent of the awarded funds without having any passed locations. Subsequently, the performance-based milestones will require a certain number of locations passed to receive additional funding.

The following will be required of subrecipients before any disbursement of BEAD funds:

➢ **Reaching grant milestones**: GTA will require the timely reporting of the completion of grant milestones, as outlined in Georgia's Initial Proposal Volume 2.

➢ **Providing compliant documentation:** The State will require subgrantees to support a request for reimbursement through a certification and a submittal of as-builts and GIS location data. The State will ensure that it has a right to access documents and physical assets in a manner similar to that employed by the federal government in broadband grant programs (the method of repayment is contingent upon further policy guidance and subject to any change based on federal program updates).

BEAD Compliance/Reporting

Semi-Annual Reporting

Include a minimum of the following:

- Speed
- Pricing & fees
- Interconnection agreements
- Contracts & subcontracts MBE & WBE
- Data & Mapping collection standards
- Completion of SF-425 & meet the requirements described in the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions
- Labor reporting for projects with $5M or more in total project costs

BEAD Compliance Requirements

Selected subrecipients are required to be compliant with all BEAD requirements, including but not limited to:

- Build America Buy America (BABA),
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and
- The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

Technical Requirements

- Applicants shall submit a technical plan that addresses all fiscal, construction, design, and engineering standards. The submission must include:
  - Technical narrative
  - Network design
  - Logical network design drawing
  - Project costs
  - Project timeline with milestones
  - Professional engineering certification
  - Capital investment schedule
  - Environmental and climate factors response

Technical Narrative

- Submitted as a .pdf.

- The technical narrative shall provide a description of the proposed project and detail how the proposed infrastructure will deliver service that reliably meets or exceeds the required speeds and latency for all broadband serviceable locations (BSL) and proposed community anchor institutions (CAI) in the project area. The narrative must include:

  – A detailed description of how the network will be connected to sufficient backhaul infrastructure to support the program performance requirements,

  – An explanation of the projected subscriber take-rate and the anticipated level of oversubscription based on the proposed network capacity.

  – A discussion of network scalability.

  – A detailed description of how the proposed network will be deployed using industry best practices.

Network Design

- Submitted as shapefiles.

- The network diagram shall include all proposed BSLs and CAIs served by the project, all proposed broadband infrastructure routes to be constructed via the project, and project area boundary polygons encompassing all infrastructure routes, BSLs, and CAIs.

  - The proposed routes shall be provided as a singular line feature representative of all broadband infrastructure (conduit, fiber, etc.) and shall be attributed to convey associated details.

  - The project area boundary polygons shall be drawn so that all proposed BSLs, CAIs, and proposed infrastructure routes are encompassed within the boundaries.

Logical Network Diagram Drawing

- Submitted as a .pdf.

- The logical network design drawing shall illustrate the logical connectivity for the proposed network; depict the desired architecture of the network in terms of hardware placement and hardware redundancy; and indicate the types of network platforms/technologies to be utilized in each layer of the network.

- Existing infrastructure present on the diagram should be identified as existing to clearly delineate new infrastructure proposed as part of the project.

- A sample drawing will be provided as part of the materials.

Project Costs

- Submitted as a spreadsheet.

- The project costs estimate shall offer sufficient granularity to demonstrate an understanding of the proposed project and its associated estimated costs.

- The cost estimate must include a detailed itemization of each cost and sufficient description to verify the eligibility of each proposed cost item.

- The project costs shall be submitted in spreadsheet format using the template provided by GTA.

- An example spreadsheet with sample costs and supporting details will be provided by GTA.

Project Costs (Template)

- The project costs template will include instructions on how to fill out the spreadsheet. Applicants shall enter individual cost items into the spreadsheet. For each proposed cost item, the applicant must fill out the following information fields:
  - Cost description – a simple description of the cost item
  - Cost category – a selectable field that assigns to the cost a specific program reporting category
  - Unit type – the unit of measurement for each cost item quantity (feet, each, hours, etc.)
  - Unit quantity – the applicant's estimated quantity of each cost item that will be required to complete the project
  - Unit cost – the applicant's estimated cost per unit for each cost item
  - Cost details and justification – the applicant's narrative supporting the estimated unit quantities and cost

- Applicants shall be afforded the flexibility to determine their individual cost items.

- The spreadsheet will automatically generate a project cost summary from the detailed cost information entered by the applicant.

Project Timeline

- Submitted as a spreadsheet.

- The project timeline shall articular the applicant's ability to complete the project within the four-year timeframe. The timeline shall include the key milestones for project implementation, including:
  - Planning/engineering
  - Permitting/make-ready
  - Material and equipment procurement
  - Network construction
  - Subscriber activations
  - Project closeout submission

- The project timeline shall be submitted in spreadsheet format using the template provided by GTA.

Professional Engineering Certification

- Submitted as a .pdf.

- The Professional Engineering certification must confirm the accurate and completeness of the Project Plan materials and attest that the proposed network can deliver broadband service that meets the requisite performance requirement to all proposed locations within the required four-year deployment timeline.

- GTA will provide a template for this certification that includes fields for the following information:
  - Name of the licensed Professional Engineer
  - License number
  - Licensed state (does not need to be Georgia)
  - License expiration data (must be currently licensed PE)
  - Professional Engineer signature

Environmental and Climate Factors

- Describe specific strategies and measures your organization will implement to address and reduce natural hazard risks, including technical measures and compliance with environmental regulations and local permitting standards.
  - Storm proofing: Describe measures integrated into your design to enhance resilience against regional weather events.
  - Technical Viability: Detail the types of strands of fiber used, and how they demonstrate capacity for future growth and sustainability.
  - Compliance with Local Standards: Explain how your design aligns with local environmental regulations and vulnerable areas.

Additional Technical Compliance Certifications

- The applicant's Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) must certify that the organization will comply with the following program requirements:
  – The proposed project will rely entirely on fiber-optic technology to each end-user premises and will ensure that the network built by the project can easily scale speeds over time to meet the evolving connectivity needs of households and businesses.
  – At time of project closeout, all proposed BSLs shall be capable for receiving *Reliable Broadband Service* with speeds of not less than 100 Mbps for downloads and 20 Mbps for uploads with 95 percent of latency measurement during testing windows falling at or below 100 milliseconds round-trip time.
  – At time of project closeout, grant-funded connections to proposed Eligible Community Anchor Institutions shall be capable of delivering service at speeds not less than 1 Gbps for downloads and 1 Gbps for uploads.
  – Applicant will obtain all necessary federal, state, and local governmental permits and required approvals necessary for the proposed work to be completed.

Questions

Contact Information

Jessica Simmons
Deputy CIO & Executive Director, Georgia Broadband Program

Sarah Baska
Director of Broadband Program Operations, Georgia Broadband Program

William Gaston
Broadband Infrastructure Manager

Oneisha Freeman Rojales
Digital Connectivity Manager

Broadband@gta.ga.gov

broadband.georgia.gov

gta.ga.gov/broadband