



CONNECT RI

FAST & AFFORDABLE INTERNET FOR ALL

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program

Final Proposal

December 16, 2025

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Definitions and Abbreviations	3
Requirement 1 – Subgrantee Selection Process Outcomes	4
Requirement 2 - Removed.....	13
Requirement 3 – Timeline for Implementation	13
.....	13
Requirement 4 – Oversight and Accountability Processes	15
Requirement 5 – Local Coordination	20
Requirement 6 – Challenge Process Results.....	21
Requirement 7 – Unserved and Underserved Locations.....	21
Requirement 8-10 – Removed.....	23
Requirement 11 – Implementation Status	23
Requirement 12 – Substantiation of Priority Broadband Projects	26
Requirement 13 – Subgrantee Selection Certification	33
Requirement 14 – Environmental and Historic Preservation Documentation	35
Requirement 15 – Consent from Tribal Entities	41
Requirement 16 – Report of Unsuccessful Application due to Eligible Entity Regulations	42
Appendix A: Required Vendor Negotiations and Cost Justifications	44

Definitions and Abbreviations

BEAD	Broadband Equity, Access, And Deployment
BoB	Benefit of the Bargain Round
BSL	Broadband Serviceable Location
CAIs	Community Anchor Institution
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
NOFO	Notice of Funding Opportunity
PA	Project Area
PAU	Project Area Unit
PBPs	Priority Broadband Projects
PE	Professional Engineer
PN	Policy Notice
RFC	Request for Clarification
RFP	Request for Proposal
RICC or Corporation	Rhode Island Commerce Corporation
WBE	Women's Business Enterprises

Requirement 1 – Subgrantee Selection Process Outcomes

The purpose of this section is for the Eligible Entity to provide data on the allocation of grant funds in adherence with its approved Initial Proposal, as modified by the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice, and document the outcomes of the Subgrantee Selection Process. It requires the Eligible Entity to provide a transparent and detailed account of how it fulfilled its commitments in a fair, open, and competitive manner. Each Eligible Entity must demonstrate that the outcomes of its process prioritized serving unserved locations first, underserved locations second, and (if applicable) CAIs last. The Eligible Entity must also show that its process aligned BEAD grant funds with other funds for broadband that the Eligible Entity receives from the federal government, an Eligible Entity, or any other source.

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 Eligible Entity must execute its deployment Subgrantee Selection Process consistent with its approved Initial Proposal, as modified by the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice. NTIA will monitor consistency between the Subgrantee Selection Process approved in the Eligible Entity's Initial Proposal and the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice and the execution of that process. As with any award term, NTIA may impose remedies for noncompliance with the terms of the approved Initial Proposal and BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice, potentially including the disallowance of noncompliant costs incurred by the Eligible Entity.

In instances where the Eligible Entity requires a correction to its approved Initial Proposal, beyond the Initial Proposal correction process detailed in the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice, the Eligible Entity must notify NTIA as soon as possible and adhere to NTIA guidance. Failure to notify NTIA of changes to the process described in its approved Initial Proposal may result in rejection of the Eligible Entity's Final Proposal, among other consequences.

To provide an adequate response, the Eligible Entity must consider its deployment subgrantee selection timelines, phases, project area definitions, evaluation procedures, and strategies to ensure universal coverage among other elements of its deployment Subgrantee Selection Process.

The Eligible Entity must describe how the Subgrantee Selection Process undertaken was consistent with that approved in the Initial Proposal, as modified by the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice.

Response:

The Corporation's subgrantee selection process followed the process approved by NTIA in the Initial Proposal and modified as necessary by the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice of June 6th, 2025 ("PN"). Specifically, the initial RFP #2508 issued by the Corporation on March 31, 2025, for subgrantee selection was cancelled following the issuance of the PN, and a new RFP (RFP #2517) was issued on July 1, 2025, as part of a Benefit of the Bargain ("BoB") round.

The Selection Process adhered to the following procurement process using a Request for Proposal ("RFP").

A. Pre-RFP

The Corporation commenced the BEAD Challenge process on May 29, 2024 and challenges were accepted starting June 6, 2024, and continued for a 30-day period, ending on July 6, 2024. Prior to the commencement of the BEAD Challenge Process, the Corporation released a broadband map showing all broadband serviceable locations ("BSLs" or "locations") in the state as well as the quality of broadband service available at those locations (marked as "served," "unserved," or "underserved"). This map allowed all Rhode Islanders to view locations and the quality of service the Corporation believed each location had. Units of local government, non-profits, and Internet Service Providers ("ISPs") were able to submit challenges to the classification of BSLs on the map.

Once the BEAD Challenge process completed on July 6, 2024, the Corporation developed a final list of BSLs eligible for BEAD funding to transmit to NTIA for final approval; this final approval was granted on January 17, 2025. The Corporation then finalized the Rhode Island Broadband Map, and published the map accompanied by the lists of unserved and underserved BSLs. The Map and the list are available at: <http://commerceri.com/broadband>.

The Corporation also created a cost estimate for constructing facilities for the final list of unserved locations and underserved locations to determine the approximate amount of residual funding it expects to be available, if any, for funding eligible Community Anchor Institutions ("CAIs").

Using the finalized list of unserved locations, underserved locations and eligible CAIs, the Corporation established and publicized a finalized list of Project Area Units ("PAUs"). Proposers could submit proposals for one or more PAUs.

B. RFP process

The Corporation issued RFP #2517 on July 1, 2025, in line with the Initial Proposal and the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice. This included the same definitions/descriptions of Eligible Subgrantees, Eligible Costs, and Ineligible Costs as was approved in the IP and published through RFP #2508. RFP #2517 modified the Evaluation Process, the Minimum Requirements, and the Scoring criteria following the PN guidance. Most importantly, the RFP adopted a technology neutral approach for the BEAD subgrantee selection process including the participation of fiber-optic technology, cable modem/hybrid fiber-coaxial technology, terrestrial fixed wireless, and low Earth orbit ("LEO") satellite services, as long as the technologies employed met the technical performance requirements in the NOFO, the PN, and the statute.

Definitions: Project Area-related definitions that were used in the RFP: below:

- "Projects" means broadband infrastructure projects that are eligible under BEAD
- "PA" means a Project Area comprised of one or more PAUs (and the BSLs and/or CAIs contained therein) that a particular proposer plans to serve, as stated in their proposal. PAs are to describe a contiguous set of PAUs or a set of closely proximate PAUs that the proposer plans to serve together using related infrastructure and operations. During the Deployment Subgrantee Selection Process, proposers may specify more than one PA within their proposal.

- “PAU” means Project Area Units comprised of contiguous, indivisible geographic units defined by the Corporation and comprise the unserved BSLs and underserved BSLs (and CAIs, if enough funding remains) in that geographic area.
- “Priority Broadband Project” (“PBP”) means a project 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.
- “Period of Performance “is a maximum period of four years from the date of the subaward for all technologies except for LEO providers
- “Unserved” means a BSL that lacks access to 25/3Mbps or a CAI that lacks access to 1000/1000 Mbps.
- “Underserved” means a BSL that lacks access to 100/20Mbps according to the BEAD Program.

BoB RFP #2517 Subgrantee Selection Timeline

Milestone	Date
RFP Posted to the Corporation and State of Rhode Island Division of Purchasing website	July 1, 2025
Pre-bid Webinar	July 3, 2025
Final Day for Proposers to submit questions or comments	July 9, 2025
Answers to questions and other addenda posted to the Corporation and State of Rhode Island Division of Purchasing website, as applicable	July 14, 2025
Proposal submittal deadline	July 22, 2025

Minimum Requirements - This section of the RFP followed and included all the Deployment Subgrantee Qualifications detailed in Volume II of the Corporation’s Initial Proposal (“IPV2”), except for the following modifications made to align to the PN:

- Deleted non-statutory requirements in the NOFO related to labor, employment, and workforce development; “Fair Labor Practices and Highly Skilled Workforce”; “Advancing Equitable Workforce Development and Job Quality Objectives”; and “Civil Rights and Nondiscrimination Law Compliance.”
- Deleted previous requirements as articulated in the NOFO related to climate change and replacing them with reliability and resilience of broadband infrastructure risk management plans, including from natural disasters as well as cybersecurity best practices.

The RFP also included a Subgrantee Information Packet consisting of links to various Federal and State requirements, rules, statutes, and regulations.

Minimum Requirements and Proposal Responsiveness Review - Prior to scoring Proposals, the Corporation undertook an initial review to determine whether the minimum requirements identified in the table below for each Proposer were met. These requirements describe the minimum qualifications or representations/certifications that must be included in a Proposal for it to be complete and therefore eligible to be evaluated.

	Minimum Requirements / Gating Criteria	Submittal Requirements
1	Financial Capability	Qualifications for Financial Obligations
		Letter of Credit
		Audited Financial Statements
		Required Business Plans and Financial Analysis
2	Managerial Capability	Resumes for Key Personnel
		Readiness to Manage Proposed Projects
3	Technical Capability	Implementation and Credentialed Workforce
		Project Management Plan
		Network Performance and Scalability
4	Compliance Evaluation	Compliance with federal, state and local Laws
5	Operational Capability	Operational Qualifications
		Number of Years of Operation
		Compliance with FCC from 477, Rules/Regulations
		Operating and Financial Reports for Electric Transmission of Distribution Services
		Operational Capabilities of New Entrants
6	Ownership	Supporting Ownership Information
7	Public Funding	Disclosure of Existing and Future Publicly Funded Projects
		Detailed Information for Existing and Future Publicly Funded Projects
9	Cybersecurity and Supply Chain	Cybersecurity risk management plan and supply chain risk management plan
10	Certification of Compliance with NTIA Regulations	Certification that the Proposers will adhere to all requirements of the BEAD NOFO, PN, and other applicable published NTIA regulations

Strategies for Universal Coverage - The Corporation’s RFP process sought proposals for both Priority Broadband Projects (“PBPs”) as well as proposals for non-PBPs for unserved and underserved locations to achieve universal coverage.

The Corporation posted the RFP on the Corporation’s website and Rhode Island’s Division of Purchasing website.

The Corporation issued a press release to announce the RFP, publicized it on its websites and emailed the announcement to subscribers of the Corporation’s newsletter. The Corporation also notified telecommunications providers registered with the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission and Division of Public Utilities and Carriers and other relevant stakeholders.

Shortly after the RFP was issued, the Corporation hosted a Pre-Bid webinar to ensure that all potential proposers received clear information about the RFP. During this session, the Corporation provided clarifying guidance to potential proposers on application guidelines and requirements. The Corporation also answered questions that potential proposers had. An additional question and answer period followed; the Corporation published answers and additional information through formal addenda for equal awareness by all potential proposers.

Proposers were required to include the following within their proposals:

- Information on their financial, operational, managerial, and technical qualifications, certifications, and compliance with minimum requirements; and
- Information to enable comprehensive evaluation of the proposal based on the stated evaluation criteria.

Evaluation Process - The proposals were due 21 days after the RFP was released. The Corporation then proceeded to review and select complete and qualified proposals for all technology types. The Corporation first evaluated all proposals for completeness. Additional clarifications and missing information were rigorously addressed through two rounds of Request for Clarifications (“RFCs”) and curing, made available to all responsive proposers. Proposals deemed complete were evaluated against required minimum qualifications. The Corporation confirmed the Proposers’ commitment to adherence to various PN-related adjustments including the Statute’s definition of PBP, the Low-Cost Broadband Service Option Requirement, and all other baseline Statutory requirements. Proposals that complied with the minimum qualifications were scored against the scoring rubric. Based on its assessment of the scoring rubric, the Corporation made provisional selection of successful Proposers using a selection committee comprised of Corporation and State of Rhode Island Executive Office of Commerce employees.

The selected Proposer(s) will enter into a fixed amount subaward agreement with the Corporation. Upon the selection of a Successful Proposer(s) but prior to finalizing a Subaward Agreement, the Corporation may proceed with negotiations to finalize a Subaward Agreement with the Successful Proposer(s). Any modifications or clarifications agreed to with the Successful Proposer(s) during Subaward Agreement negotiations shall be incorporated into the final Subaward Agreement. If an Agreement cannot be successfully negotiated within a reasonable period of time, negotiations will be terminated, and negotiations with the next highest-ranking Proposer may commence. The process may continue until a Subaward Agreement is signed.

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.

Final Proposals will be evaluated against the specific steps identified in the Eligible Entity’s approved Initial Proposal, as modified by the PN

*The Eligible Entity must provide a description of the steps that it took to ensure a Subgrantee Selection Process that is **fair, open, and competitive**. This should include a description of the Eligible Entity’s state or territory*

procurement policies and procedures and the internal controls that facilitated the Eligible Entity's oversight of each phase of the process.

*The Eligible Entity must describe steps it took to ensure a **fair** process, including safeguards against each of the following:*

- *Collusion;*
- *Bias;*
- *Conflicts of interest;*
- *Arbitrary decisions; and*
- *Other actions that would undermine confidence in the process.*

Examples of steps an Eligible Entity could take to ensure a fair process include, but are not limited to:

- *Evidence that all applicants had access to the scoring rubric prior to submitting applications;*
- *Evidence of consistent application of scoring criteria by qualified reviewers;*
- *Samples of training materials provided to reviewers, including training on how to report conflicts of interest;*
- *Description of how reviewers documented their review findings to provide a rationale for their scoring assessments;*
- *Descriptions of the Eligible Entity's policy and/or internal controls to identify and mitigate conflicts of interest, including methods to prevent, report, and resolve conflict of interest concerns during application review and award;*
- *Descriptions of the Eligible Entity's oversight procedures to ensure application of a consistent standard of review across reviewers;*
- *Descriptions of the Eligible Entity's policy and/or internal controls to identify and mitigate instances of collusion, including instances of collusion between potential applicants and collusion between applicants and Eligible Entity staff, contractors, or other persons involved in the deployment Subgrantee Selection Process;*
- *Descriptions of the use of a pre-application process (if applicable); and/or*
- *Evidence that all applicants had the same opportunity to cure their applications (if applicable).*
- *Evidence that applicants were notified and had access to the Eligible Entities updated scoring rubric and other guidance following the release of the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice and before conducting further rounds of subgrantee selection.*

*The Eligible Entity must include how the deployment Subgrantee Selection Process was **open** by describing how the Eligible Entity provided adequate public notice to potential subgrantees to facilitate participation by a wide variety of potential applicants, to ensure an open and competitive process, and to prevent favoritism, collusion, and abuse.*

Examples of steps an Eligible Entity could take to ensure an open process include, but are not limited to:

- *Evidence that all eligible participants defined in the Eligible Entity's approved Initial Proposal were permitted to participate;*
- *Evidence that all applicants had the same amount of time to apply between the public notice and deadline (or the Eligible Entity describes instances when application extensions were granted and provides a rationale for this determination), and the deadline did not place an unreasonable burden on applicants to submit an application;*
- *A communication plan that promotes participation from a wide variety of potential applicants;*

- A description of the ways an Eligible Entity removed barriers or provided financial incentives.

The Eligible Entity must also describe how it ensured the deployment Subgrantee Selection Process was **competitive**, such as by using a competitively neutral evaluation criteria that did not favor one type of provider over another, except certain preferences expressed neutrally and in advance.

Examples of steps an Eligible Entity could take to ensure a competitive process include, but are not limited to:

- Evidence that different types of providers were able to submit competitive applications;
- Evidence that the Eligible Entity only engaged in provider-specific outreach after at least one round of applications were submitted (i.e., in the case of areas that received no applications or for the purposes of deconfliction);
- A description that the Eligible Entity's curing requests did not impose unreasonably burdensome timelines that certain providers would be at a disadvantage to address;
- A description of how the project deconfliction process was transparently communicated to applicants and fairly applied; and/or
- A description of how the Eligible Entity's process to adjust the scope of submitted applications followed the steps in the approved Initial Proposal and the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice.

Additionally, the Eligible Entity must describe the processes in place to ensure reviewers were trained, qualified, and objective. The Eligible Entity must describe how reviewers were identified, including how the State Broadband Office assessed reviewers' qualifications and potential conflicts of interest (including what it did to avoid even the appearance of conflicts of interest), whether contractors were utilized, and whether different reviewers were used to review individual components of the applications (e.g., certified professional engineers reviewing applicants' network designs). The Eligible Entity must demonstrate that it ensured the quality of each review, including reviewer oversight procedures. If applicable, the Eligible Entity must describe how a review committee or final approval by a governing body factored into the review process.

Response:

The Corporation wants to foster a strong digital advancement ecosystem built on transparent and clear decision making. The Corporation seeks to achieve the best outcomes for unserved and underserved communities and is committed to awarding subgrants to deploy broadband through a **fair, open, and competitive** process.

The principles of a fair, open, and competitive process allow the Corporation to incorporate key public policy goals into contracts with private partners while increasing choice and competition from service providers.

Fair. The Corporation evaluated all respondents against the same minimum criteria detailed in RFP #2517 that were both clear and not overly restrictive to ensure that entities of all types and sizes could participate. To safeguard against bias and collusion, the Corporation ensured fairness with a review and scoring process that was transparent, objective, systematic, and grounded in data. The Corporation established and clearly communicated evaluation criteria, which were included in RFP #2517 and ensured they were applied consistently to all proposers.

The Corporation created a scoring committee to evaluate proposals, which consisted of individuals with technical, financial, and operational management expertise. To safeguard against conflicts of interest and arbitrary decision making, the Corporation required evaluators to disclose any

conflicts of interest, asking them to recuse themselves if needed. Each committee member attested to the fact that they did not have a conflict of interest with any of the proposers.

Open. The Corporation developed a process that was open and transparent through the BEAD RFP process. The Deployment Subgrantee Selection Process ensured an open and competitive process to prevent bias and collusion. Any type of ISP registered to do business in Rhode Island or any ISP that could become registered in Rhode Island prior to the execution of a subaward and is capable of providing residential internet service in Rhode Island was eligible to submit a proposal including, but not limited to, for-profit entities, public utilities, public utility districts, local governments, non-profit organizations, co-operatives, and public-private partnerships.

The following types of entities were eligible to apply for BEAD grants:

- Private companies (e.g., corporations, limited liability companies, general partnerships, limited partnerships, etc.)
- Local governmental entities (e.g., municipalities or municipal light plants that offer broadband service)
- Tribal Governments
- Nonprofit Organizations
- Co-operatives, electric co-operatives, and public or private utilities
- Public utility districts
- Other entities that develop and/or operate broadband networks and could demonstrate the experience, capacity, and financial resources and stability to satisfy the grant obligations.

Competitive. To ensure the Deployment Subgrantee Selection Process was competitive the Corporation posted the BEAD RFP on its web page and the web page of the Division of Purchasing, sent emails to relevant contacts to inform prospective proposers of the Deployment Subgrantee Selection Process, and advertised the RFP in advance of posting to ensure maximum visibility and time to respond. The Corporation designed the RFP for the Deployment Subgrantee Selection Process with reasonable timelines to allow all proposers to construct quality proposals. Additionally, the Corporation provided all proposers with the same information and selected and established secondary evaluation criteria so as not to favor or unfairly advantage one proposer over another.

Training, qualifications, and objectiveness of reviewers. As stated above, and in alignment with Rhode Island procurement requirements, the Corporation created a Review Committee that was comprised of individuals with expertise in broadband technology, finance, and operational management. Committee members were provided an initial training on the goals of the BEAD program and scoring requirements, as outlined in the PN. Each Review Committee member attested to their understanding of the BEAD program, the BEAD scoring criteria, and their ability to remain objective. The Review Committee had two meetings to review and evaluate proposals, with the final determinations unanimous among the members. As required by policy, the scores were finalized and are maintained by the Corporation's Assistant Controller.

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. If there was a divergence, explain how the process that was conducted diverged from the approved process.

When there were initially no applications to serve a location or group of locations that are unserved and underserved, the Eligible Entity must affirm that it followed a procedure consistent with the process approved in the Initial Proposal, as modified by the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice.

Response:

Not Applicable. Proposals were received for all unserved and underserved locations.

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.

If applicable, Eligible entity must describe its methodology for revising its list of eligible CAIs to conform with the statutory definition of a CAI as established by the Infrastructure Act. The Eligible Entity shall not propose to serve a CAI that does not meet the statutory definition (i.e. a CAI that fits an additional category that was approved in the Eligible Entity’s Initial Proposal Volume I).

If the Eligible Entity is not proposing to fund any CAIs, it may note ‘Not Applicable.’

Response:

Corporation staff modified the CAI list in alignment with the PN by removing CAIs that did not meet the statutory definition of a CAI as established by the Investment in Infrastructure and Jobs Act.

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.

The Eligible Entity must certify that it will retain all subgrantee records for a period of at least three (3) years from the date of closeout of the relevant subgrant and in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.334. 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.

If the Eligible Entity cannot certify this, the Eligible Entity should contact its assigned Federal Program Officer. The Eligible Entity should note that responding ‘No’ for this question may result in an extended timeline for NTIA’s review and approval of the Final Proposal through curing.

Response:

Yes, the Corporation certifies that our office 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 three (3) years from the date of submission of the subgrant’s final expenditure report. These records will 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.

Requirement 2 - Removed

N/A per Revised PN.

Requirement 3 – Timeline for Implementation

Relevant Instructions from NOFO Section IV.B.9.b, Page 47:

The Final Proposal must include...:

3. A timeline for implementation of the detailed plan and completion of each project and other eligible activity to be funded.

Relevant Instructions from NOFO Section IV.D.2.c., Page 74:

Prospective subgrantees must submit a network design, diagram, project costs, build-out timeline and milestones for project implementation, and a capital investment schedule evidencing complete build-out and the initiation of service within four years of the date on which the entity receives the subgrant, all certified by a professional engineer, stating that the proposed network can deliver broadband service that meets the requisite performance requirements to all locations served by the Project. An Eligible Entity shall not approve any grant for the deployment or upgrading of network facilities unless it determines that the materials submitted to it demonstrate the prospective subgrantee's technical capability with respect to the proposed project.

Relevant Instructions from NOFO Section II.B, Page 18:

As established in [47 U.S.C. § 1702(h)(4)(C)], subgrantees 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 subgrantee receives the subgrant from the Eligible Entity.

3.1: Has the Eligible Entity taken measures to:

- (a) ensure that each subgrantees 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;

(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 Eligible Entity must affirm that it will ensure that each BEAD subgrantee will begin to provide services to customers that desire broadband service within the project area not later than four years after the date on which the subgrantee receives the subgrant.

The Eligible Entity also must affirm that it will ensure that all BEAD-funded subgrant activities are completed at least 120 days prior to the end of the Eligible Entity's period of performance. For example, each Eligible Entity can satisfy this requirement by explaining its monitoring process, highlighting its speed to deployment commitments in its Subgrantee Selection Process, or creating binding agreements with its subgrantees. All of the Eligible Entity's subgrants must end at least 120 days prior to the end of the Eligible Entity's own period of performance, to allow sufficient time for the Eligible Entity to close out all of its subgrants in an orderly fashion prior to the end of its own period of performance. In that connection, the Eligible Entity also must clearly articulate that it will ensure that all BEAD grant activities that it has undertaken itself (including via contract) are completed by the end of its own period of performance.

The Eligible Entity must affirm that it will ensure each subgrantee reaches key milestones in their submitted proposals/documentation. In doing so, the Eligible Entity affirms that it will ensure subgrantees that made specific commitments in response to the "speed to deployment" scoring criteria meet the timelines stated in their applications. Each Eligible Entity must affirm that it will ensure the completion of all BEAD activities within the mandated timeframes, which may include the Eligible Entity's requirements for subgrantee reporting and accountability.

Response:

(a) The Corporation affirms that it will ensure that each BEAD subgrantee will begin to provide services to customers that desire broadband service within the project area not later than four (4) years after the date on which the subgrantee receives the subgrant.

Pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 1702(h)(4)(C), the BEAD NOFO, the Corporation's IPv2, and supplementary NTIA guidance and the PN, the Corporation's RFP #2517 required all bidders to ensure that they deploy their Funded Networks and begin providing broadband service to each customer that desires broadband service no later than four years after the date on which the Subgrantee receives the subgrant for the applicable network. Further, the Corporation mandated the Grantee to establish interim buildout milestones as part of their Project Delivery Schedule, enforceable as conditions of the subgrant, sufficient to ensure that subgrantees are making reasonable progress toward meeting the four-year deployment deadline.

(b) The Corporation affirms that the following actions were taken by the Corporation to ensure that all BEAD subgrant activities are completed at least 120 days prior to the end of the Corporation's period of performance, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.344.

Prospective subgrantees are required to submit a Project Delivery Schedule showing complete build-out and initiation of service, all certified by a Professional Engineer ("PE"), within four

(4) years of the date on which the Proposer receives the subgrant. The Project Delivery Schedule is required to detail various cost components, such as design, engineering, procurement, mobilization, civil works, structural, mechanical, electrical works, testing, and commissioning. The build-out timeline includes key milestones for Project preparation and implementation including network design and engineering, aerial or buried rights of way licensing and permitting, construction and providing services to subscribers.

The Corporation further affirms it will employ a robust subgrantee monitoring program that will consist of risk assessments, quarterly subgrantee reporting, random sampling of subgrantee files, corrective action policies and post-contracting support to ensure subgrantees can meet all required BEAD compliance reporting and activities. Such a process will ensure each subgrantee reaches key milestones in their submitted proposals/documentation.

The Corporation intends to engage in the following monitoring activities for subgrantee activities including, but not limited to:

- Coordination with subgrantees through individual discussions, group or team meetings, events or trainings.
- Reviewing financial and programmatic reports including invoices and progress and outcome reports in alignment with contractual obligations.
- Conducting an annual Subgrantee Assessment, verifying that every subgrantee is audited as required by 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F.
- Conducting follow-up to ensure that the subgrantee takes timely and appropriate action on all deficiencies pertaining to the federal award through audits, on-site reviews, and other means.

Through active subgrantee monitoring, as outlined in the BEAD Program Monitoring Plan, and frequent engagement with Subgrantees, the Corporation will ensure that all BEAD subgrant activities are completed at least 120 days prior to the end of the Corporation's period of performance, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.344. The Corporation affirms that it will prepare a closeout agreement and submit it to all subgrantees for execution and ensure that all BEAD-funded subgrant activities are completed at least 120 days prior to the end of the Corporation's period of performance, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.344; and ensure that all programmatic BEAD grant activities undertaken by RICC are completed by the end of its own period of performance, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.344.

(c) The Corporation affirms that it will ensure all programmatic BEAD grant activities undertaken by the Corporation are completed by the end of the period of performance for its award, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.344.

Requirement 4 – Oversight and Accountability Processes

Relevant Instructions from NOFO Section IV.B.9.b, Page 47:

The Final Proposal must include...:

4. Processes for oversight and accountability to ensure the proper use of the grant funds allocated to the Eligible Entity under the BEAD Program consistent with Section IX.G of this NOFO.

Relevant Instructions from NOFO Section IV.C.1.b, Page 51:

In addition to demonstrating how it expects to satisfy the subrecipient monitoring and management requirements identified in 2 C.F.R. Part 200 Subpart D, each Eligible Entity must include sufficient accountability procedures within its program to ensure subgrantee compliance with all applicable Program requirements. Each Eligible Entity must, at a minimum, include in any subgrant agreement reasonable provisions allowing for recovery of funds in the event of a subgrantee's noncompliance with the BEAD Program's requirements, including but not limited to failure to deploy network infrastructure in accordance with mandated deadlines. Each Eligible Entity must, at a minimum, employ the following practices: (1) 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); (2) the inclusion of clawback provisions (i.e., provisions allowing recoupment of funds previously disbursed) in agreements between the Eligible Entity and any subgrantee; (3) timely subgrantee reporting mandates; and (4) robust subgrantee monitoring practices. NTIA will review proposed subgrant processes during the Initial Proposal and Final Proposal review phases and will reject Proposals that fail to provide sufficient recourse against subgrantees that do not fulfill their legal and contractual responsibilities. NTIA likewise will pursue clawback of funds directly from Eligible Entities that fail to ensure subgrantee accountability to the fullest extent of the law.

Relevant Instructions from NOFO Section IX.G.1, Pages 95

NTIA, Eligible Entities, and subgrantees each have a critical role to play in ensuring that the BEAD Program is implemented in a manner that ensures transparency, accountability, and oversight sufficient to, among other things:

1. Minimize the opportunity for waste, fraud, and abuse;
2. Ensure that recipients of grants under the Program use grant funds to further the overall purpose of the Program in compliance with the requirements of the Infrastructure Act, this NOFO, 2 C.F.R. Part 200, the terms and conditions of the award, and other applicable law; and
3. Allow the public to understand and monitor grants and subgrants awarded under the Program.

To that end, NTIA and Eligible Entities shall:

1. Conduct such audits of grantees and subgrantees as are necessary and appropriate, including audit requirements described in Section VII.G. Eligible Entities shall report the full results of any audits they conduct to the appropriate Federal Program Officer.
2. Develop monitoring plans, subject to the approval of the Assistant Secretary, which may include site visits or desk reviews, technical assistance, and random sampling of compliance requirements.

3. Impose specific conditions on grant awards designed to mitigate the risk of nonperformance where appropriate.

Each Eligible Entity and/or subgrantee shall, as appropriate:

1. Comply with the reporting requirements set forth in Section I.E of this NOFO.
2. Comply with the obligations set forth in 2 C.F.R. Part 200 and the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions.
3. Establish and widely publicize telephone numbers and email addresses for the Eligible Entity's Office of Inspector General (or comparable entity) or subgrantees' internal ethics office (or comparable entity) for the purpose of reporting waste, fraud or abuse in the Program. Eligible Entities and subgrantees shall produce copies of materials used for such purpose upon request of the Federal Program Officer.

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?

The Eligible Entity does not need to have a waste, fraud, and abuse hotline specific to its broadband office – any statewide hotline is sufficient. If the Eligible Entity does not have a public hotline at the time of its Final Proposal submission, the Eligible Entity should respond 'No' and contact its Federal Program Officer.

Response:

The Eligible Entity should understand that responding 'No' for this question may result in an extended timeline for NTIA's review and approval of its Final Proposal.

Yes. The Corporation adheres to the state's fraud, waste, and abuse policies and procedures. The Rhode Island Office of Management and Budget through its Office of Internal Audit and Program Integrity receives and investigates allegations of fraud, waste and abuse made through the Fraud Hotline. The Corporation will publish this hotline information on its ConnectRI website.

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.

The Eligible Entity must upload the required documents listed above. The Eligible Entity must describe a robust and timely monitoring plan, detailing how it will ensure subgrantee

accountability for the BEAD funding subgrantees receive through at least semiannual reporting for the duration of the subgrant.

The Eligible Entity should note that under the BEAD Uniform Guidance exceptions, commercial entity subgrantees are **not** subject to 2 C.F.R. 200.501(f) but are subject to 2 C.F.R. 200.501(g), which establishes the pass-through entity as responsible for subgrantee audit compliance. In other words, non-federal entities must comply with the single audit requirement (spending \$750,000 of federal grants in a year) but commercial entities do not have such requirement **unless** that Eligible Entity requires it. The Eligible Entity should consider these standard requirements in developing the requirements for its subgrantees.

[[Attachments uploaded separately]]

BEAD Program Monitoring Plan

Examples of details in a BEAD program monitoring plan include, but are not limited to:

- Detailing how subgrantees will comply with the terms and conditions of the award including the Infrastructure Act, BEAD NOFO, the terms of the Eligible Entity's specific BEAD award including any Specific Award Conditions (SACs), the BEAD Program General Terms and Conditions, award amendments, and applicable laws and regulations;
- Detailing how the Eligible Entity will ensure subgrantees implement projects on schedule and make adequate progress toward achieving identified metrics, milestones, goals, objectives, and planned outcomes;
- Detailing how the Eligible Entity will ensure subgrantees meet financial and programmatic reporting requirements, adhere to submission deadlines, and provide accurate information;
- Detailing how the Eligible Entity will ensure subgrantees expend Federal funds as authorized within the period of performance; and/or
- Detailing how the Eligible Entity will monitor subgrantees to ensure the project is completed on time, and limit potential waste, fraud, and abuse of federal funding.

The Eligible Entity should refer to forthcoming NTIA guidance on completing its BEAD Program Monitoring Plan.

Agency Policy Documentation

Within its agency policy documentation, the Eligible Entity must detail its reimbursement policy for deployment and non-deployment projects, or in the case of fixed amount subawards, its disbursement agreement based on milestone met, unit built, or project complete. Additionally, the Eligible Entity must include clawback provisions to which subgrantees will be subject. The Eligible Entity must also include the reporting cadence in which subgrantees will be required to submit materials to the Eligible Entity.

Examples of details that can be in the agency policy documentation include, but are not limited to:

- *The timeline for how the Eligible Entity will distribute funds to the subgrantee for all deployment projects consistent with specific deadlines established by its award;*
- *The timeline for how subgrantees will report progress to the Eligible Entity;*
- *Established justifications the Eligible Entity may use to withhold reimbursement of funding to the subgrantee, or in the case of fixed amount subawards, to clawback funding; and/or*
- *Which entity within the state/territory is responsible for determining when the Eligible Entity can clawback funding (i.e., the state's Chief Information Office).*

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, 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 clawback 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.

The Eligible Entity has already agreed to all of these conditions in its BEAD grant agreement. This includes the responsibility under 2 C.F.R. § 300.332 to ensure that all necessary BEAD conditions are included in each subgrant agreement. The Eligible Entity must certify, by selecting 'Yes,' that its subgrant agreements will include all required components to comply with the BEAD NOFO. Prior to provisionally selecting subgrantees, each Eligible Entity must publicly post a template/draft of its broadband deployment subgrant agreement for transparency purposes, to demonstrate that all required components are included.

Yes.

Requirement 5 – Local Coordination

Response:

The Corporation solicited input and comments regarding this document from all Rhode Islanders and other stakeholders. The Corporation posted the Final Proposal – inclusive of the lists of eligible BEAD locations, Community Anchor Institutions, deployment projects, and preliminary subgrantee selections – to its website, <https://commerceri.com/broadband>, and announced its release through an email (700+ contacts, including ISPs operating in the state and proposers) and via social media channels. Additionally, the Corporation verbally informed key stakeholders of the public comment period for the Final Proposal through meetings with the Connected Community Committee, and representatives of political subdivisions (e.g., municipal leaders, state representatives, etc.). The public comment period began on August 27, 2025, and ended September 3, 2025. The Corporation carefully reviewed and considered all feedback submitted.

The following is a high-level summary of the public comments received:

- Commentors generally supported the preliminary subgrantee selections and commended the Corporation’s technology-neutral and cost-effective approach.
- One preliminarily selected proposer criticized the Corporation’s preliminary subgrantee selections for not considering alternative technologies, even though the Corporation preliminarily awarded subgrants to low-earth orbit satellite and fixed wireless access providers, in addition to wireline fiber providers.
- Commentors recommended that Rhode Island’s remaining BEAD funds be used for:
 - Network resiliency and wireless infrastructure, especially in disaster-prone areas.
 - Broadband adoption efforts.
 - Multi-Dwelling Unit connectivity program, targeting affordable housing where a significant portion of the digital divide exists.
 - Computer ownership, affordable devices, digital skills, and accessible technical support, especially for historically marginalized groups, such as older adults.
- Commentors requested that senior centers and libraries be included as community anchor institutions.
- Commentors requested greater transparency in low-cost broadband plans to address affordability barriers.

The Corporation carefully considered each comment within the confines of the BEAD NOFO, the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice, and other NTIA guidance.

As most comments received pertained to non-deployment activities, which are not a focus of the Final Proposal given the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice, no changes or alterations to the Final

Proposal were required. However, multiple commentors noted that, because BEAD deployment will require only 16 percent of Rhode Island’s full BEAD allocation, the Corporation should communicate to NTIA that the Corporation, as the BEAD Eligible Entity for the State of Rhode Island, is fully authorized to, and intends to, use the remainder of its full BEAD allocation to meet objectives in compliance with the IIJA.

Pursuant to 47 U.S.C. § 1702 (f), the State of Rhode Island intends to use its full BEAD allocation through a comprehensive set of eligible activities, including those described in this Final Proposal as well as future activities consistent with the uses authorized by statute and subject to forthcoming guidance from the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information. Accordingly, any remaining allocated funds should not be considered unused but rather reserved for these future eligible program activities.

Requirement 6 – Challenge Process Results

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.

Response:

Yes. The Corporation certifies that it successfully completed the BEAD Challenge Process and received approval of the results from NTIA.

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.

Response:

Following approval of the Challenge Process by NTIA and the required public comment period, the Corporation publicly posted the final location classifications on their website (<https://connectri-ricom.hub.arcgis.com/pages/state-challenge-process>) on April 17, 2025.

Requirement 7 – Unserved and Underserved Locations

Coverage of Unserved Locations

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).

Response:

Yes. The Corporation certifies that it 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).

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.

Response:

Not applicable.

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.

Response:

Not applicable.

Coverage of Underserved Locations

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).

Response:

Yes. The Corporation certifies that it 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).

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 unreasonably excessive, explain and include a strong showing of how the Eligible Entity made that determination.

Response:

Not applicable.

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.

Response:

Not applicable.

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 final list of eligible locations 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.

Response:

Yes. The Corporation certifies that it 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.

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 Capital Projects Fund/State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds), in its list of proposed projects.

Response:

Yes. The Corporation certifies that it has accounted for all enforceable commitments after the submission of its challenge results, including state enforceable commitments and federal enforceable commitments that the Corporation was notified of and did not object to, and/or federally funded awards for which the Corporation has discretion over where they are spent, in its list of proposed projects.

Requirement 8-10 – Removed

N/A per Revised PN

Requirement 11 – Implementation Status

The purpose of this requirement is to ensure the Eligible Entity is making process towards the implementation of plans approved in its Initial Proposal, as modified by incorporating the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice. This requirement also aims to ensure each Eligible Entity is continuing to implement plans to reduce costs and barriers to deployment, account for network reliability and resilience, and address eligible subscribers' access to affordable broadband service options.

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 Eligible Entity will respond by indicating either: 'Complete,' 'In Progress,' or 'Not Started' to describe the implementation of its plans regarding reducing costs and barriers to deployment.

The Eligible Entity can refer to the permitting resources on the [NTIA BEAD website](#), including the [Permitting Best Practices: Case Studies](#) for additional information to incorporate in its response.

The [Permitting Best Practices: Case Studies](#) outlines case studies and examples of streamlining permitting, including Broadband Ready Communities, E-Permitting, and Rights-of-Way.

The [Permitting Needs Assessment](#) contains a checklist of four major permitting categories, including Rights-of-Way, Pole Attachments, Conduit Access, and Environment Planning/Historic Preservation.

Response:

The Corporation is undertaking several efforts to streamline and support the permitting process, as outlined in the Initial Proposal. The below provides status of these efforts:

Completed: The Corporation created Project Areas to ease, as possible, permitting barriers.

In progress: Further, as outlined in the Initial Proposal, the Corporation has met with many local officials and state authorities to understand permitting processes. These stakeholders include municipality leaders, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), RI Energy, RIDOT, RI Turnpike and Bridge Authority, and other entities that will control the review and approval of permits.

Not started: The Corporation has not yet deployed the municipal help desk; this will follow on from our initial conversations with local authorities and will begin once subgrantee selections have been finalized.

In progress: The Corporation has compiled a map of pole location data throughout the state in order to streamline the cost-effective access to poles, conduits, and easements. After subgrantee selection, the Corporation will work with subawardees to aggregate requests for pole access to Rhode Island Energy.

In progress: The Corporation has compiled a list of relevant broadband infrastructure suppliers through our SupplyRI program to mitigate supply chain disruptions for selected vendors, as applicable.

11.2 Question (Y/N): Affirm that the Eligible Entity required subgrantees to certify compliance with existing federal labor and employment laws.

The Eligible Entity must certify, by selecting 'Yes,' that it required subgrantees to certify compliance with federal labor and employment laws.

If the Eligible Entity indicates ‘No,’ the Eligible Entity must answer Intake Question 11.3, and provide an explanation for this response. The Eligible Entity should note that responding ‘No’ to this question will result in an extended timeline for NTIA’s review of the Final Proposal.

Response:

Yes. The Corporation certifies that subgrantees were required to certify compliance with existing federal labor and employment laws.

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.

Intake Question 11.3 will only appear in NGP if the Eligible Entity responds ‘No’ to Intake Question 11.2.

Response:

Not Applicable.

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.⁶

If all subgrantees will be required to offer a low-cost broadband service option for the duration of the Federal interest period, please select ‘Yes.’

Response:

Yes, the Corporation certifies that all subgrantees selected will be required to offer a low-cost broadband service option for the duration of the ten-year Federal interest period.

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.

Intake Question 11.5 will only appear in NGP if the Eligible Entity responds ‘No’ to Intake Question 11.4.

Response:

Not applicable.

11.6 Question (Y/N): Certify that all subgrantees have planned for the reliability and resilience of BEAD-funded networks.

The Eligible Entity must certify, by selecting ‘Yes,’ that it focused on ensuring the reliability and resilience of BEAD-funded broadband infrastructure when selecting subgrantees.

If the Eligible Entity indicates ‘No,’ the Eligible Entity must answer Intake Question 11.7, and provide an explanation for this response. The Eligible Entity should note that responding ‘No’ to this question will result in an extended timeline for NTIA’s review of the Final Proposal.

Response:

Yes. The Corporation certifies that all subgrantees have planned for the reliability and resilience of BEAD-funded networks.

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 planned for the reliability and resilience of BEAD-funded networks in their network designs, explain why the Eligible Entity was unable to do so.

Intake Question 11.7 will only appear in NGP if the Eligible Entity responds ‘No’ to Intake Question 11.6.

Response:

Not applicable.

Requirement 12 – Substantiation of Priority Broadband Projects

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.

The Corporation followed the PN's definition of a Priority Broadband Project ("PBP") in RFP #2517: as a "project 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 is the definition of Priority Broadband Project as written in the Investment in Infrastructure and Jobs Act (IIJA, 47 U.S.C. 1702 (a)(1)(1)) and further explained in the IIJA, 47 U.S.C. 1702 (h)(1)(A)(ii) as well as in the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice (PN) Section 3.1, pages 8-10.

The Corporation engaged in a methodical evaluation process, assessing applications on speed, latency, and scalability, in order to ensure that its BEAD deployment efforts support current and future connectivity needs.

The Corporation considered any qualified proposal, irrespective of technology, that met all conditions (Speed & Latency and Scalability) of this definition as a Priority Broadband Project.

The Corporation's RFP urged proposers to familiarize themselves with NTIA's Restructuring Policy Notice and subsequent Frequently Asked Question publications. In addition to the responses to the RFP, the Corporation used a Request for Clarification process, consistent with Rhode Island procurement law, to elicit missing information and gain additional clarifications to make sure that the expected requirements would be fully met in the future, irrespective of conditions on the ground.

As a result of the Corporation's application of this definition, it was able to achieve outstanding results for Rhode Island's BEAD deployment efforts:

- Service to all BEAD-eligible BSLs in Rhode Island using a technology neutral approach, which will create jobs and promote long-term economic development.
- An 86% reduction in BEAD outlays from prior projections. (Previously, the Corporation estimated spending approximately \$108.7M on deployment; the Corporation now anticipates spending approximately \$16M on deployment.)
- Support for emerging technologies and new entrants: The Corporation awarded subgrants to low-earth orbit satellite and terrestrial fixed wireless providers, in addition to established wireline providers.

Speed & Latency

"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."

Rhode Island is a densely populated state, with an average of 420.9 housing units per square mile of land area. The most rural county has a household density of 170.7 housing units per square mile (per US Census). Given Rhode Island's high concentrations of homes, businesses, and community anchor institutions, the Corporation reviewed RFP#2517 proposals against their demonstrated ability to deliver at least 100/20 Mbps, minimal-latency service to all eligible BSLs simultaneously upon deployment.

To apply the Speed & Latency requirements of a Priority Broadband Project, the Corporation:

- Confirmed that proposers demonstrated the ability to provide broadband service at speeds of no less than 100 megabits per second for downloads and 20 megabits per second for uploads.
- Confirmed that proposers demonstrated the ability to provide broadband service with a latency less than or equal to 100 milliseconds.
- Confirmed that proposers can provide the required speeds and latencies to a new broadband subscriber without negatively impacting existing subscribers. The Corporation ensured that the existing customer base would not be negatively impacted by the award of BEAD locations for a given technology to be considered scalable.

The Corporation also considered:

- The ability of a proposer’s network to provide required speeds and latency to proximate locations, as Rhode Island has an average 1,000 users per square mile in state.

To review a technology’s ability to scale, the Corporation considered the currently served speeds of 100/20 Mbps, the proposal’s stated network capacity and network quality, the project area’s number of BSLs, the project area’s geographic area, current customer base (as applicable), and future demand. Specifically as an indicator of ability to scale, Priority Broadband Projects needed to have technologies that—at present—did not require lowering the speeds of present customers in order to achieve the minimum required speeds for BEAD-funded customers.

Specifically, any Proposer that stated in their Proposal that they would “maintain the ability to prioritize customers and dampen non-BEAD growth efforts to serve BEAD households with 100/20Mbps service” or that they would “[serve] BEAD customers at increased network priority compared to non-BEAD customers in Rhode Island,” were determined that said Proposer will not “provide the required speeds and latencies to a new broadband subscriber without negatively impacting existing subscribers.”

This review was done based on statements made by the Proposers themselves about their planned speeds for all network installations they planned.

Scalability

“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.”

To qualify as a PBP, technologies must demonstrate ease of scalability to meet projected demand for current and future users. To apply the Scalability requirements of a PBP, the Corporation confirmed that proposers demonstrated the ability to easily and economically scale capacity to meet the growth in broadband demand expected over the next 10 years.

Finally, if the performance history did not have an example of the level of scale needed for the BEAD program, the Corporation 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.

See Appendix A for further information to substantiate PBP areas as required by NTIA’s “extremely high-cost threshold” review.

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.

The Eligible Entity must describe its methodology for determining whether a project is a Priority Broadband Project, and how it applied this methodology consistently across all applications.

The Eligible Entity will note which projects are identified as Priority Broadband Projects in the *fp_deployment_projects.csv* file.

Response:

In line with the PN, the Corporation defined Priority Broadband Project” (“PBP”) in its RFP #2517 as a “project 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.”

The Corporation considered all qualifying proposals per the above definition, as a Priority Broadband Project, irrespective of the technology used. The Corporation prioritized such PBP projects for awards. A Request for Clarifications (RFC) process was used to elicit missing information and gain additional clarifications to make sure that the expected requirements would be fully met in the future, irrespective of conditions on the ground. For example, to review a technology’s ability to scale, the Corporation considered the currently served speeds of 100/20 Mbps, the proposal’s stated network capacity, the project area’s number of BSLs, the project area’s geographic area, current customer base (as applicable), and future demand.

Request for Clarifications (RFC) Process

When evaluating both the Speed & Latency and the Scalability requirements of a Priority Broadband Project for a particular proposal, the Corporation considered both the proposer’s RFP response, as well as the proposer’s response to the Corporation’s subsequent RFC, which was used to ascertain missing information and provide all proposers additional opportunities to substantiate that their proposal would meet the requirements of a Priority Broadband Project.

Through the Request for Clarification process, the Corporation evaluated topography and common line of sight barriers like trees. 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. To inform this analysis, the Corporation reviewed industry white papers on tree canopy impact on LEO service as well as a LEO-provided study and compared this information against Rhode Island specific data on tree-canopy coverage within individual municipalities. The Corporation also took into consideration Rhode Island’s experiences in such areas as well as experiences of other States with line-of-sight limitations.

Details of the Request for Clarification round(s) are public records available for review consistent with Rhode Island procurement law. Examples of the requests include, but are not limited to:

- Please confirm that BEAD funds will only be used to serve BEAD-eligible locations.
- Can [Proposer] confirm that it will serve each BSL directly and not provide service specifically to a present customer at a BSL? And, further, can [Proposer] confirm that it will be the responsibility of the company to ensure maintained access to internet at the BSL for at least 10 years?
- Please provide the following:
 - UEI number
 - For each PAU
 - The total number of miles that will be deployed
 - Anticipated number of aerial miles of fiber to be deployed
 - Anticipated number of buried fiber to be deployed
 - Estimated number of employment opportunities to be created by deployment

Density and Topology Considerations

As Rhode Island is the second most densely populated state in the Union, the Corporation particularly noted that project area density impacts ease of scalability. In high density areas, a BEAD Priority Broadband Project should demonstrate the ability to deliver the required speeds and latencies to all BSLs simultaneously, as well as the ability to scale these speeds over time to meet the “evolving connectivity needs of households and businesses.”

The Corporation also considered:

- The proposer’s history in providing scalable broadband service. Further, the Corporation 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 Corporation 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, the Corporation 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.
- The proposer’s dependency on emerging and/or unproven technologies, which could require additional regulatory approvals, such as zoning, spectrum, or orbital clearances, that introduces uncertainty.
- The operational lifespans of the proposed network, which could pose replacement risks, impacting long-term reliability and cost-effectiveness.
- The ability of a proposer’s network to reliably provide broadband service to locations with high-density BSLs.
- The ability of a proposer’s network to reliably provide broadband service within a Project Area, given the PA’s topology/geography and other environmental considerations.

- Related to topology, this review included an assessment of tree canopy and other obstructions that can degrade signals, reduce bandwidth, increase latency, and impact reliability. Specifically, LEO performance is more reliable with an unobstructed sky view, while fixed wireless signals degrade when traveling through vegetation. The Corporation reviewed the percentage of tree canopy coverage for each of the Project Areas, especially focusing on the PAs with over 50% tree canopy coverage. Rhode Island’s eligible Project Areas have upwards of 86 percent tree canopy coverage.

Specifically, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management analysis of municipal tree coverage finds the following coverage percentages for each of the Project Areas:

PAU	PAU Name	Tree Coverage
1	Glocester	80-86% tree coverage
2	Little Compton	50-59% tree coverage
3	Middletown	20-29% tree coverage
5	Prudence Island	**
6	Hog Island	**
7	Warren	30-39% tree coverage
8	Foster	80-86% tree coverage
		North Providence: 20-29% tree coverage
9	N Prov and Smithfield	Smithfield: 60-69% tree coverage
10	Hillsgrove	30-39% tree coverage
		East Greenwich: 70-79% tree coverage
		West Greenwich: 84-86.2% tree coverage
11	East and West Greenwich	70-79% tree coverage
12	Charlestown	40-49% tree coverage
13	Narragansett	70-79% tree coverage
14	Rockville and Hopkinton	70-79% tree coverage
15	Narragansett (island)	**

**Island-level data not available through the RI DEM analysis for Prudence and Hog Islands. Islands additionally include estuaries, marshlands, and sandbars. (Prudence is the largest island in the Narragansett Bay National Estuarian Research Reserve [NBNRR], which controls approximately 63% of Prudence Island. The habituated land on Prudence Island lies within the “forested upland” of the island, including a total of 186 ha cherry-cedar forest. (NBNERR). Hog Island’s populations centers are heavily covered with new growth (50-70 tree coverage) forest. Fox Island in Narragansett has a single-property ownership structure and does not have heavy tree coverage.

The Corporation was comprehensive, transparent, and fair in its review and analysis of proposed projects for PBP designation. In project areas where proposers met the definition of PBP, regardless of technology used, consistent with the Restructuring Policy Notice, the Corporation awarded the PBP designation. In project areas where projects failed to meet the definition, the

Corporation did not award the PBP designation. In its subsequent subgrantee selection, the Corporation prioritized PBP-designated projects for awards consistent with IIJA statute, the BEAD NOFO, and the Restructuring Policy Notice.

Requirement 13 –Subgrantee Selection Certification

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 Eligible Entity must describe the following:

A summary of how the Eligible Entity applied the “Minimal BEAD Program Outlay” scoring criteria to each competitive application

If secondary criteria were applicable according to the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice, a summary of how the Eligible Entity applied the criteria, (i.e., how points were assigned within each criterion) and identify the corresponding weights assigned to each criterion:

- Speed to deployment; and
- Speed of network and other technical capabilities as defined by the Eligible Entity;

For locations where Eligible Entities have already completed their subgrantee selection process and identified preliminary or provisionally selected subgrantees, Eligible Entities will give additional weight to Preliminary/Provisional Subgrantees.

Response:

The Corporation evaluated subgrantee proposals according to the prioritization framework in Section 3.4 of the PN. 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. Specific adjustments based on PN guidance included a mandatory Low-Cost Service Option from the subgrantees instead of the requirements for the Middle-Class Affordability Plan of the NOFO.

After the Corporation established that a proposal meets the gating criteria, it evaluated the proposal using two sets of Scoring Criteria, Primary, and Secondary, per the revised scoring rubric from the PN. The Corporation prioritized proposals that met the definition of a PBP. However, in the absence of any qualifying PBP proposals, the Corporation considered the competing non-PBP proposal(s). The evaluation criteria remained the same for non-PBP proposals.

The Primary evaluation criteria was Minimal BEAD Outlay, and Corporation chose Speed of Network and Other Technical Capabilities amongst the allowable Secondary criteria. Per the PN, the Secondary Criteria were only applied if a Proposer’s BEAD outlay was within 15 percent from the Proposer with the lowest BEAD outlay on a per BSL basis, for the same general project area.

The scoring criteria as set forth in the RFP included bonus points for companies that qualified as inclusive small business enterprises (“ISBEs”), as required under Rhode Island law. This bonus was included while the Corporation’s request for a waiver to incorporate the ISBE bonus in the scoring criteria was pending before NTIA. NTIA subsequently denied that waiver request. No proposer qualified for ISBE bonus points, thus rendering the ISBE bonus irrelevant.

Priority and Non-Priority Broadband Projects Scoring Criteria

#	Primary Criteria (Required by NTIA)	Points	Weighting Criteria
P1	Minimum BEAD Program Outlay	100	100%
P2	ISBE Participation ¹	6.0	Bonus
	Primary Criteria Subtotal	106	100%
	Secondary Criteria		
S1	Speed of Network and Other Technical Capabilities	100	100%
	Secondary Criteria Subtotal	100	100%

The Corporation awarded the maximum points to proposal(s) that resulted in the lowest total BEAD outlay. When comparing proposals, the Corporation evaluated both the total BEAD funding requested (i.e., the total cost of a PAU minus the proposer's required match) and the BEAD cost per location (i.e., the total BEAD funding divided by the number of BSLs the proposal will serve). This analysis determined which PAU proposals are most cost-effective.

¹ Ultimately, the ISBE participation scoring bonus was not utilized, though it was included in the published RFP #2517.

As required by the PN, the Corporation reviewed the submittals for this evaluation in conjunction with the business plan (in the case of all terrestrial providers) and related proforma or cash flow analysis, and the Project Management Plan including a narrative, which must detail the project’s quality, design, scalability, and specific sources of matching funds, to justify the costs proposed. This review was done for reasonableness using available benchmarks. Wherever the Corporation was not satisfied with the Proposer’s submittals in certain areas, it requested clarifications from Proposers. The primary criteria allowed the Corporation to prioritize the most cost-efficient and effective priority broadband projects for each location across the state.

The Secondary Scoring Criteria as stipulated in the RFP is as below:

Secondary Scoring Criteria

Description	Maximum Points
Proposer’s network can currently offer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent, symmetric speeds of at least 2 Gbps upload and 2 Gbps download to all BSLs simultaneously. • Consistent latency under 25 milliseconds 	50
Proposer’s network has at least a 20-year-lifespan without requiring substantial infrastructure replacement (apart from regular maintenance and upgrades)	12.5
Proposer’s network can meet increasing connectivity demand	12.5
Proposer’s network is not substantially impacted by congestion or oversubscription	25
Secondary Criteria Subtotal	100

Requirement 14 – Environmental and Historic Preservation Documentation

The purpose of this section is to ensure that the Eligible Entity provides information on how it will ensure subgrantees will comply with environmental and historic preservation requirements including but not limited to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321, *et seq.*) (NEPA), Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*) (NHPA), Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1521, *et seq.*), Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1251, *et seq.*), and all other applicable Federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations.

It is a BEAD program imperative to ensure that projects are in environmental compliance and a condition of the award that each Eligible Entity is a joint lead agency for NEPA.

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/regional-programmatic-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.

- 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.

Joint Lead Agency Responsibility Summary: A statement of the Eligible Entity’s understanding of its obligations as a joint lead agency to implement NEPA requirements under 42 U.S.C. 4336a and a description of the Eligible

- Entity’s plan to prepare and/or supervise the preparation of all required environmental analyses and review documents.

Description of FirstNet Regional PEIS Evaluation:

Identification of the relevant First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) PEIS chapter pertinent to the Eligible Entity, and a concise evaluation of the sufficiency of the environmental analysis contained in the relevant FirstNet Regional PEIS (see [Sample evaluation memo](#)), updating any information necessary for the NEPA analysis contained in the FirstNet Regional PEIS to apply to the Eligible Entity’s subgrant broadband deployment projects.

Specific Award Conditions (SACs) Description: A description of the Eligible Entity’s current or planned use of SACs and/or other strategies to ensure proper procedures and approvals are in place for disbursement of funds while projects are awaiting final NEPA approval. For example, this may include utilizing an EHP-focused SAC attached to subgrantee awards that are anticipated to require ground-disturbing activities.

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation (“Corporation”) is the Eligible Entity for the Rhode Island BEAD program and will serve as joint lead agency with the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (“NTIA”) in implementing EHP requirements under 42 U.S.C § 4336a. In accordance with this role, the Corporation will follow the state’s procurement statutes and regulations to solicit, identify, and contract with National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”) subject matter experts to lead and coordinate the EHP compliance program, ensuring consistency, accuracy, and adherence to all statutory obligations. The Corporation will submit all NEPA documentation requested or required by the NTIA through the NTIA Environmental Screening and Permitting Tracking Tool (“ESAPTT”).

As the Joint Lead Agency, the Corporation will ensure that subgrantees will comply with environmental and historic preservation requirements including but not limited to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321, et seq.) (NEPA), Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.) (NHPA), Section 7 of the Endangered

Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1521, et seq.), Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1251, et seq.), and all other applicable Federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations. The Corporation will additionally consult with the State Historic Preservation Office as well as and fully document all findings and correspondence in accordance with applicable federal standards. This compliance is a critical part of the project review process, and all subgrantee projects will undergo a detailed evaluation to ensure minimal environmental and historic impacts.

Current Status

The Corporation is committed to full compliance with NEPA (42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.) and National Historic Preservation Act (“NHPA”) (54 U.S.C. § 300101 et seq.) in relation to its BEAD program. During the pre-award phase of the BEAD Program, the Corporation has engaged in the following activities to ensure NEPA/NHPA compliance internally and for its subgrantees:

- Reviewed BEAD requirements in alignment with NEPA regulations, practices, and policies with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, which is the centralized location for NEPA compliance statewide.
- Provided guidance on applicable NEPA/NHPA requirements during the BEAD pre-application webinar and as part of the BEAD resource package included with the BEAD Request for Proposals (BEAD RFP-2517).
- Required NEPA/NHPA compliance within BEAD RFP-2517.
- Reviewed and evaluated all submitted broadband infrastructure proposals for vendor agreement to comply with and implement NEPA/NHPA requirements. Applications that failed to note compliance were not considered for BEAD funding.
- Engaged in an initial review and assessment of the FirstNet Nationwide Public Safety Broadband Network Regional PEIS Volume 11- Chapter 13, dated 2017.
- Researched and developed the RFP that will be disseminated for EHP subject matter expert Procurement, with an anticipated procurement date in January 2026.

The Corporation will ensure that it engages in a comprehensive environmental review process that aligns with federal and state requirements.

To ensure the timely completion of historic preservation review for all BEAD-funded activities, the Corporation will require that Subgrantees provide all such information required to:

- at the earliest possible time, provide the NTIA-assigned Environmental Program Officer sufficient information to initiate Tribal notification via the FCC’s Tower Construction Notification System (TCNS) when required for grant funded activities;
- apply the Advisory on Historic Preservation (ACHP) Program Comment to Avoid Duplicative Reviews for Wireless Communications Facilities or any other applicable program comment or program alternative developed to address the Section 106 review of communications facilities for relevant projects
- notify NTIA of any Tribal request for government-to-government consultation or any identification that a grant funded activity may impact a historic property of religious or cultural significance to a Tribe; and
- provide all consulting parties with the statutorily required time to respond to its determination of a grant funded activity’s effect on historic properties.

Evaluation of FirstNet Regional PEIS

Preliminary review found the PEIS sufficient in addressing the deployment-related activities for Rhode Island. Due to the provisional grantee selection process, Rhode Island will engage in a comprehensive secondary review to further assess the sufficiency and applicability of the PEIS to BEAD-funded activities. Furthermore, the Corporation will work in partnership with the Rhode Island Executive Office of Commerce, Rhode Island Department of Transportation, and Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and its contracted subject matter expert (s) to determine if any updated Rhode Island regulatory changes and/or protected species since PEIS publication need to be evaluated for inclusion. All projects will be evaluated to ensure specific activities of the project are covered by the FirstNet Regional PEIS. If a proposed activity is not sufficiently covered by the PEIS, additional analysis will be conducted to determine whether supplemental environmental assessment is required to address identified gaps or deficiencies.

Review Process

The Corporation will ensure compliance with NEPA/NHPA and the timely completion of environmental review for all BEAD-funded activities. The Corporation will supervise the preparation of required EHP compliance documents or, depending on the complexity of the deployment activity and the capability of the subgrantee implementing the deployment activity, may directly assist in the preparation of such documents.

Upon approval of Rhode Island's Final Proposal, the Corporation will use the ESAPTT, which serves as the central system for creating and managing NEPA project records. Each subgrantee project will undergo a preliminary review to determine the applicability of categorical exclusions (CEs) consistent with federal regulations. The Corporation will work in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to facilitate and streamline the review process.

If a CE is determined to be potentially applicable, the Corporation will assess and document the presence or absence of any extraordinary circumstances that may require further environmental review. This evaluation ensures that no significant environmental impacts are overlooked. All findings, including documentation of CE applicability or the need for additional analysis, will be recorded within the ESAPTT to maintain transparency and compliance.

Upon completion of this evaluation, draft NEPA documentation and relevant project information will be compiled and transmitted electronically via the ESAPTT to the NTIA for review and approval. This integrated workflow facilitates timely, accurate, and consistent environmental review, ensuring that subgrantee projects funded under the BEAD program meet federal environmental standards while advancing statewide broadband infrastructure deployment.

The Corporation shall conduct ongoing discussions with the subgrantees prior to project implementation to determine the appropriate course of action to ensure EHP compliance, taking into consideration the volume and complexity of projects assigned to each subgrantee and the technical EHP capability of each subgrantee. Subgrantees will not be allowed to commence construction and funds will not be disbursed until any necessary environmental review is complete and NTIA has approved any necessary decision document, except for the limited permissible activities.

Specific Award Conditions

To reinforce environmental compliance, the Corporation will apply Specific Award Conditions (SACs) to all subgrantee agreements. With the exception of limited permissible pre-implementation activities, the Corporation will prohibit subgrantees from initiating or authorizing any grant-funded implementation activities until all required EHP review is completed. Subgrantees that undertake unauthorized project activities may face de-obligation of funding.

Permissible Pre-Implementation Activities

In alignment with NTIA guidance, the following are permissible pre-implementation activities:

- Pre-construction planning, including collecting information necessary to complete environmental reviews
- Applications for environmental permits
- Studies including, but not limited to:
 - Environmental assessments
 - Wetland delineations
 - Biological assessments
 - Archeological surveys
 - Other environmental reviews and analyses
- Administrative and pre-award application activities
- Activities supporting consultations required under NHPA, the Endangered Species Act, and the Clean Water Act.
- Other activities, as deemed allowable by the NOFO and the Corporation.

Subgrantee Requirements

With the exception of the limited allowable pre-implementation activities outlined above, the Corporation will, per NTIA guidance, include the following required conditions in all awards to subgrantees:

- The Subgrantee will not commence implementation, and funds will not be disbursed, until any necessary environmental review is complete, and NTIA has approved any necessary decision document. This review includes:
 - All reviews required under the NEPA must be completed. This includes obtaining the appropriate decision documents such as a CE, Record of Environmental Consideration, Finding of No Significant Impact, or Record of Decision, as applicable.
 - Subgrantees must complete all reviews required under Section 106 of the NHPA, including consultations with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and federally recognized Native American tribes, as required by federal law.
 - Consultations must be completed with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service, as applicable, under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. Additionally, consultations with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act must be completed, if applicable.

- Demonstration of compliance with all other applicable federal, state, and local environmental laws and regulations.
- Subgrantees are responsible for preparing all required NEPA documentation, securing necessary permits, and adhering to statutory deadlines outlined in 42 U.S.C. § 4336g(a). Subgrantees will be required to submit a detailed milestone outlining specific deadlines and the subgrantee’s plan to meet all timing requirements.
- The subgrantee must immediately inform the Corporation if, during construction, it inadvertently encounters culturally and historically sensitive sites or artifacts such as burial sites and stop all project construction until the subgrantee and the Corporation can determine potential impacts and mitigations.
- Additional Special Awards Conditions may be added if Environmental Assessments or Environmental Impact Statements are determined to be required, and specific mitigation activities are deemed to be required.

The Corporation will incorporate all SACs within the subgrantees’ Subaward Agreement.

Requirement 15 – Consent from Tribal Entities

The purpose of this section is to ensure that proper guidelines, regulations, and Tribal consent with respect to Tribal Lands were followed for deployment projects on Tribal Lands. For the program’s specific instructions on obtaining Tribal consent in the case of consortia, projects in Hawaii, and projects in Alaska, please refer to footnote 70 on page 48 of the BEAD NOFO.

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.

If the Eligible Entity did not have any cases where deployment on Tribal Lands is to take place, the Eligible Entity will not upload a document for this Intake Question in NGP.

If the Eligible Entity has any deployment project taking place on federally recognized Tribal Lands the Eligible Entity must provide a Resolution of Consent (in PDF format) from each Tribal Government whose Land the deployment project will be taking place upon. Projects that intersect with Tribal Lands should be indicated in the Deployment Project CSV

(submitted in the [Final Proposal Data Submission](#) with a ‘Y’ in the “Intersect with Tribal Lands” column.

The Resolution of Consent may follow the Tribal Government’s standard format; NTIA will not provide a standard template for this requirement. The Eligible Entity must ensure that each certification document has the following:

- The appropriate Authorized Organization Representative signatures;
- Come from each Tribal Government governing authority (i.e., the Tribal Council), and/or other governing body, upon whose Tribal Lands the infrastructure will be deployed;
 - Applies to tribes specified in the Federally Recognized Indian Tribal List Act of 1994.
- Reference the BEAD NOFO and be dated after the approval of the Eligible Entity’s Initial Proposal;
- The relevant context on the planned (f)(1) broadband deployment including:
 - The entities that will deploy and operate the network;
 - The broadband technologies that will be deployed on Tribal Lands;
 - The timeframe of the agreement; and
- A description of the land proposed for use as part of the proposed project;
 - Identify whether the land is owned, held in Trust, land held in fee simple by the Tribe, or land under a long-term lease by the Tribe;
 - If owned, identify the landowner; and
 - Provide a commitment in writing from the landowner authorizing the applicant’s use of that land for the propose project;
- Appears complete; and
- The name of the Resolution of Consent PDF is included in the deployment Project Data.

Response:

Not applicable. Rhode Island does not have any locations on tribal lands.

Requirement 16 – Report of Unsuccessful Application due to Eligible Entity Regulations

Relevant Instructions from NOFO Section IV.B.9.b, Page

49: The Final Proposal must include...:

16. A description of (1) each unsuccessful application that was affected by laws of the Eligible Entity concerning broadband, utility services, or similar subjects, whether they predate or postdate enactment of the Infrastructure Act, that the Eligible Entity did not waive for purposes of BEAD Program project selection and that either (a) preclude certain public sector providers from participation in the subgrant competition or (b) impose specific requirements on public sector entities, such as limitations on the sources of financing, the required imputation of costs not actually incurred by the public sector entity, or restrictions on the service a public sector entity can offer; and (2) how those laws impacted the decision to deny each such application.

The purpose of this section is to disclose whether the laws the Eligible Entity **did not** waive concerning broadband, utility services, or similar subjects that either preclude certain public sector providers from participation in the subgrant process or impose specific requirements and limitations on public sector entities impacted the Eligible Entity’s Subgrantee Selection Process.

This could include laws that have the effect of excluding providers from offering broadband service or rendering them incapable of effectively competing for subgrants. The Eligible Entity must not have excluded cooperatives, nonprofit organizations, public-private partnerships, public or private utilities, public utility districts, or local governments (“potential providers”) from eligibility for BEAD Program funds. An example of such law could include a ban on municipal broadband or co-op providers.

16.1 Question (Y/N): Did the Eligible Entity have any applications that were unsuccessful due to laws of the Eligible Entity concerning broadband, utility services, or similar subjects, whether they pre-date or post-date enactment of the Infrastructure Act, that the Eligible Entity did not waive for purposes of the BEAD Program?

If the Eligible Entity had any applications that were unsuccessful due to laws within its jurisdiction concerning broadband, utility services, or similar subjects, it must indicate ‘Yes.’ The Eligible Entity must include all laws within its jurisdiction that directly resulted in unsuccessful applications, regardless of whether the law predates or was enacted after the passage of the Infrastructure Act in November 2021.

If the Eligible Entity did not have any cases where subgrant applications for projects were unsuccessful due to Eligible Entity laws, the Eligible Entity must select ‘No.’

This question is not asking if there are any state or territory laws or regulations surrounding broadband, utility services, etc., but only about the scenario in which a state or territory law or regulation prevented a subgrantee’s application from being provisionally awarded for a project.

Response:

No.

16.2 Reserved as not-applicable.

Appendix A: Required Vendor Negotiations and Cost Justifications

FPO confirms there are nine projects that fall into the excessive cost category. One project is in the 65-85 percentile category and eight projects are in the Over 85 + 15% percentile. Curing is as follows: Per Section 3.4 of the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice, NTIA "... reserves the right to reject any proposed deployment project or specific BSL connection for which costs to deploy are excessive, as determined by NTIA based on the cost characteristics of the area to be served." There is one project in the Between 65th–85th Percentile CSV file, or projects moved below the 85th Percentile after negotiations: Based on the submitted Deployment Projects CSV, NTIA has identified projects for which costs to deploy could be excessively costly and additional information is required to justify the Eligible Entity's selection of these projects. Please provide additional information, including: - A summary of extenuating circumstances to explain the higher costs (e.g., terrain/ topography, tree canopy, density of locations, Tribal lands, other circumstances as described) - For projects that triggered the secondary scoring criteria (within 15% of the cost of the selected project), a list of other priority applications received for the same general project area. - Were non-priority applications received for the same general project area? (Yes/No) o If yes, explain the basis for the non-priority designation for the non-priority proposals to serve the same general project area (i.e., the application of the methodology submitted in Final Proposal Requirement 12 to each specified project) When providing the above additional information, prioritize submitting in a format that is straightforward to review. This will vary based on the number of projects. In some cases, emailing an attachment to the Federal Program Officer may be more appropriate than responding via text in the NGP field. There are Zero projects represented in the Within 85th + 15% Percentile CSV file. This information is included in case you move any of the projects from the "Over 85th + 15% Percentile" category down to this one: Based on the submitted Deployment Projects CSV, NTIA has identified projects for which costs to deploy marginally exceed the reference estimate (i.e., 85th + 15% Percentile) and could be considered excessively costly. For these projects, the Eligible Entity has 72 hours to renegotiate with the preliminary awardee to lower the project cost below the threshold. The threshold for RI is: \$4,500. If the Eligible Entity successfully renegotiates below the threshold, provide additional information for the project as described for the 65th-85th Percentile above. If the Eligible Entity is unable to renegotiate with the preliminary awardee to lower the project cost below the threshold, the Eligible Entity must proceed to final negotiation with all applicants for that project area, regardless of priority broadband classification, as described below. There are eight projects represented in the Over 85th + 15% Percentile CSV file, or projects unable to be renegotiated from the Within 85th + 15% Percentile CSV file: Based on the submitted Deployment Projects CSV, NTIA has identified projects for which costs to deploy are excessive. The EE may demonstrate extraordinary circumstances to justify projects over the 85th Percentile to NTIA. If the EE believes extraordinary circumstances are present, it should make that case in writing and proceed with working through the steps detailed below. Examples of circumstances that may be considered extraordinary include regulatory prohibitions on specific technologies, and Tribal lands. Examples of circumstances that are not considered extraordinary include projects in rural areas, challenging terrain/topography, and dense tree canopy. The Eligible Entity has 72 hours to offer all applicants for the project area, regardless of priority broadband classification, an opportunity to negotiate their application below the threshold or to confirm that the applicant has provided its lowest cost proposal. The Eligible Entity must select the lowest cost proposal, regardless of priority broadband classification. The threshold for RI is \$4,500. The Eligible Entity does not need to select a project that it deems incapable of serving the locations in question, whether because of technical deficiency, legal prohibition, or some other reason. If the Eligible Entity successfully negotiates below the threshold, provide additional information for the project as described for the 65th-85th Percentile above. If the Eligible Entity

cannot negotiate below the 85th Percentile and NTIA does not approve extraordinary circumstances, it must apply Reason Code 7X to the project locations.

Based on NTIA’s curing feedback and requests, the Corporation undertook negotiations with its preliminarily selected subgrantees. As a result of these negotiations and the best and final offers presented by preliminarily selected subgrantees, the Corporation now proposes projects that, on average, cost \$3,950.39 per BSL, more than 10% below NTIA’s \$4,500 threshold. This represents savings of nearly 40% of the per BSL cost compared to the Corporation’s Final Proposal. Overall, Rhode Island’s BEAD program will cost \$12,017,040, only 11% of the total Rhode Island BEAD allocation and a five percentage point, or a 24 percent, reduction from the Final Proposal submission. These savings have been achieved while also providing reliable and scalable broadband to rural and hard-working Rhode Island citizens.

The Corporation understands that 65% of the excessive cost threshold as determined by the NTIA for the State of Rhode Island is \$3,000; that 85% of the determined “excessive cost threshold” is \$4,500, and that the “85% + 15%” designation is \$5,175. If these understandings are correct, the Corporation understands that the 9 Project Areas that the NTIA requests further information and vendor negotiations around are:

PAU	PAU Name	BSLs
1	Glocester	59
3	Middletown	143
5	Prudence Island	391
8	Foster	98
9	N Prov and Smithfield	36
11	East and West Greenwich	98
12	Charlestown	237
13	Narragansett	563
14	Rockville and Hopkinton	23

This represents 1,625 locations, or 62% of Rhode Island’s eligible BSLs.

The Corporation welcomes the opportunity to further clarify the measured, objective decisioning that was used to determine the preliminary vendor awards for the BEAD program as well as discuss potential decisioning with the NTIA as we seek to ensure all Rhode Island citizens have access to reliable, scalable 100/20Mbps internet service. Our work was not capricious or arbitrary but was a serious and considered effort to follow the BEAD Notice of Funding Opportunity and the Restructuring Policy Notice in order to both ensure a benefit of the bargain for the national taxpayer as well as provide the necessary infrastructure to ensure Rhode Island taxpayers benefit from the program their tax dollars support.

The Corporation takes very seriously the benefit to the taxpayer as required by the PN and are proud that the preliminary selections made result in an overall cost to consumer (including both the initial infrastructure build out as well as the monthly cost for internet) over a ten-year period to be just over \$28,000,000. If the Corporation is required to shift selections to the respondent non-PBP Low Earth Orbit (LEO) provider for all eligible BSLs, that cost to consumer becomes over \$41,600,000 over a ten-year period of performance. What Rhode Island has proposed is the best benefit of the bargain outcome—lower costs for taxpayers, and fast, reliable service for Rhode Island citizens.

While we make considerable project area-by-project area reasoning below, it is important to recognize that the combination of Rhode Island’s small size and dense population makes LEO solutions uniquely unsuitable for providing quality broadband service to the state. Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites often produce coverage footprints with radii of several hundred kilometers, depending on altitude and beam-angle. For example, at ~550 km altitude and with moderate minimum elevation angles, a LEO satellite might have a coverage radius on the order of 500-600 km (~300-400 miles). Rhode Island is geographically smaller than the coverage radius of a typical LEO satellite: Rhode Island is 48 miles from North to South and 37 miles from East to West at its widest point. As a result, the entire state of Rhode Island can, and we expect would, be covered by a single LEO satellite.

Therefore, for all of Rhode Island and every PA within it, and by the nature of the LEO technology, the beam from the single LEO satellite would simultaneously encompass densely populated urban or suburban zones, in addition to relatively rural areas. That means the same beam serves many users in high-density areas (where demand is heavy) as well as users in lower density rural spots, leading to congestion on the shared capacity. This mixing—forced by large beam footprints—negatively impacts the ability to deliver consistently high speeds, low latency, and high reliability, even where geography might otherwise favor good service. Additionally, monitoring subgrantees that deploy non-PBP LEO satellite technology will be essential as recent reporting, supported by speed tests in Rhode Island, finds that despite satellite internet service provider claims, satellite-provided broadband speeds can vary widely during any given day. (See: “Starlink Promised High Speed Internet - Here's What Owners Are Actually Getting,” BGR, Oct. 10, 2025, accessed Oct. 15, 2025: <https://www.bgr.com/1986436/starlink-satellite-internet-speeds-reports-from-users/>)

Monitoring subgrantees that deploy non-PBP LEO satellite technology will be more costly for the administration of Rhode Island’s BEAD program, compared to those deploying Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) or Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH) networks. Unlike FWA or FTTH deployments, which have fixed infrastructure and predictable coverage areas, LEO satellite services depend on dynamic satellite constellations and user terminal performance that can vary by geography, time of day, and weather conditions. As a result, verifying compliance with BEAD performance standards (particularly speed, latency, and reliability) requires more frequent and geographically distributed testing and monitoring.

To ensure accurate monitoring, the Corporation would need to employ staff dedicated to conducting random performance tests in each LEO project area on a monthly basis. This would involve:

1. Travel and logistics costs associated with testing in multiple, potentially remote locations;
2. Specialized equipment or service subscriptions to measure latency and throughput accurately for satellite systems; and
3. Additional labor hours to manage, analyze, and report results across a more variable network environment.

By contrast, monitoring subgrantees deploying FWA or FTTH can often be done remotely or through network management data, given their static infrastructure and more predictable performance characteristics.

Not only are the monitoring activities more complex for LEO satellite subgrantees, but the monitoring period is 10 years longer than for other technologies.

The Corporation initially estimates that over the complete performance period for LEO subgrantees, the total incremental cost of monitoring LEO subgrantees would exceed \$700 per BEAD-eligible BSL. This would be an added monitoring cost above what is already proposed in the FPPR.

Finally, please note that altering the Corporation's preliminary award decisions may considerably increase monthly costs for the hardworking taxpayers of Rhode Island. For example, in the nine projects the NTIA has identified, customers of the Corporation's awarded Priority Broadband Project proposer would receive at least 100/20 Mbps service for \$45 per month for four years. However, if the NTIA selects the nonpriority proposer, those same customers would receive 100/20 Mbps service for \$120 per month for ten years, \$40/month more expensive than currently available to Rhode Island potential LEO customers. In other words, while the upfront BEAD outlay for Priority Broadband Projects may be slightly higher than for nonpriority projects, forcing the selection of the nonpriority proposer will increase by three times the monthly cost to consumers and increase substantially the overall cost of the program over a ten-year period, undercutting the benefit of the bargain for taxpayers.

The Corporation below details the review and further negotiation we have undergone and hope that the NTIA can, considering all factors, credit the Corporation's analysis.

First speaking to the single PA (which we understand to be Middletown) that is below the NITA threshold number but has still been flagged as requiring a cost justification:

- **Middletown:** BEAD per location outlay: \$3,462.29.
 - *Justification for cost:* Middletown is on an island, requiring conduit run over a bridge, increasing costs. Further, a material number of the provisionally awarded locations are part of an MDU; the provisionally selected provider has included the internal path creation and wiring in the final number. Finally, it should be noted that the total project cost is about \$8,800/BSL; the vendor is providing a benefit of the bargain to taxpayers by providing a high match to this Project Area.
 - *Other priority applications:* Netspeed, LLC (GoNetSpeed), with a per BSL cost of \$17,803, which did not trigger the secondary scoring criteria.

- *Non priority applications*; One non-priority application was received for this Project Area. This application was determined to not be a Priority Broadband Project based on the criteria described in Requirement 12, “Substantiation of Priority Broadband Projects,” and further applied to the unique features of this Project Area. The non-priority application explicitly stated it would lower speeds of current customers in order to ensure BEAD customers received required speeds. Additionally, the unique features of the PA that limit satellite capacity include population density: The PA has a population density of 1,344.5 residents per square mile and 537.4 housing units per square mile. The PA also experiences significant weather, with about 100 rainy days per year, vulnerability to extreme winds and coastal storms, and months of cloud coverage, especially from mid-November to the end of June, all of which can cause degradation to satellite internet.

Next, speaking to the eight PAs that we understand are above the NTIA threshold number: There was only one priority broadband provider that responded to each of these PAs. One additional non-priority provider also bid on all eight PAs. This provider was holistically determined to be non-priority due to language in its proposal detailing (as described in Requirement 12) that the vendor would throttle current customers in order to be able to provide 100/20Mbps speeds to BEAD customers—signaling an inability to ensure speeds and scalability of the technology, as required by the NTIA’s definition of a Priority Broadband Project. Further PA-level justification is additionally provided below as the Corporation ensured thorough and measured analysis to ensure the best long-term use of these once-in-a-lifetime infrastructure investment funds in service of our citizens.

For each of the additional PAs that were selected and which the NTIA has brought to question, the Corporation offers both further cost savings for the taxpayer based upon further negotiation with the preliminarily selected provider, as well as further Project Area-specific rationale for selection of the recommended vendor and technology solution. This rationale comprises: a) cost justifications due to extraordinary circumstances, and b) further validation of the Corporation’s determination that non-priority broadband technology cannot in good confidence deliver the required speeds outlined in the NTIA NOFO. As stated in the curing above, the Corporation does not “need to select a project that it deems incapable of serving the locations in question.”

In each of the below Project Areas, the preliminary proposer ensured as lean a bid as possible by reducing contingencies, value engineering, and bringing in house more of the administrative costs, and pushing out the time horizon for recouping costs on build.

- **Glocester:** Original BEAD per location outlay: \$9,621.73; Negotiated BEAD per location outlay: \$5,685.47
 - **Extraordinary circumstances:** Rural area necessitates a long backbone run (over 10 miles), with fixed costs dominating 50% of the budget. Heavy ledge rock conditions, prevalent in northwestern RI’s glacial till, require specialized trenching at \$20-\$30 per linear foot (LF) (vs. national \$9.50/LF), plus hydraulic hammers and disposal. Rural Right of Ways (ROWs) with narrow, winding roads mandate police details (\$50-\$75/hour), adding to costs. In addition, non-priority emerging technologies could require additional regulatory approvals, such as

zoning, spectrum, or orbital clearances, which may introduce uncertainty—specifically, installations must comply with Rhode Island Building Code and local ordinances, including height of building restrictions, limiting capacity of LEO installations to be roof mounted at some BSLs. Additional aesthetic local ordinances need to be considered as well. **Non-priority technology restrictions:** PA has 80-86% tree canopy coverage, making low-earth orbit (LEO) internet an infeasible solution. LEO installations (antennae, communication equipment, and cable distribution systems) are required to be installed by electricians licensed by the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, making installations of LEO additionally restricted (per the RI Building Code Commission).

- **Prudence Island:** Original BEAD per location outlay: \$8,769.75; Negotiated BEAD per location outlay: \$6,313.61
 - **Extraordinary circumstances:** Yes; island logistics for an island only accessible via a 20-30 min ferry ride: Ferry-only access to the island inflates construction mobilization, requires housing crews, and inflates material delivery. There is also a critical resiliency need on the island that requires fully reliable service: public safety, EMS, mobile health center, and the community schoolhouse. As an island, residents require internet that can maintain connection in high-winds and other natural emergencies to ensure island EMS, police, and fire have uninterrupted access to NG911 and interoperable communications, and that students—most of whom commute to the mainland for their schooling—have continuous access to learning. In addition, LEO installations (antennae, communication equipment, and cable distribution systems) face the same extraordinary labor requirements as they are required to be installed by electricians licensed by the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, making installations of LEO additionally restricted (per the RI Building Code Commission).
 - **Non-priority technology restrictions:** While island-level data is not available through the RI DEM tree canopy coverage analysis for Prudence Island, the habituated land on Prudence Island lies within the “forested upland” of the island, including a total of 186 ha cherry-cedar forest. The island additionally includes estuaries, marshlands, and sandbars. (Prudence is the largest island in the Narragansett Bay National Estuarian Research Reserve [NBNRR], which controls approximately 63% of Prudence Island. And the populations are densely centered within homestead communities, making Prudence both tree covered and densely populated. Further, based on real-world customer data, satellite solutions fail latency/availability requirements in many areas of the island. Anecdotal data from island residents indicate that those home on the shoreline of the island fare well with satellite solutions while inland homes are unable to rely on it in the same way. As many of the homesteads are in the West, East, and North of the island, many residents of Prudence Island are unable to use satellite internet because they lack a clear view of the southern sky, which is necessary for the satellite dish to receive signals, or due to other location-specific obstructions or coverage issues within their immediate area. As example, recent tests in the Homestead village, the most densely populated on the island, averaged 42.04Mbps download and 27.49Mbps upload. Non-priority emerging technologies could require additional regulatory approvals, such as zoning, spectrum, or orbital clearances, which may

introduce uncertainty—specifically, installations must comply with Rhode Island Building Code and local ordinances, including height of building restrictions, limiting capacity of LEO installations to be roof mounted at some BSLs. Additional aesthetic local ordinances need to be considered as well.

- **Foster:** Original BEAD per location outlay: \$8,814.00; Negotiated BEAD per location outlay: \$5,685.47
 - **Extraordinary circumstances:** Rural, low-density terrain with heavy ledge rock (80% of routes) requires directional drilling or blasting at \$25-\$35/LF, limiting alternate routing options due to protected forests. RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM) environmental reviews for right of way disturbances add \$5,000-\$10,000 in studies and are an added regulatory burden. Non-priority emerging technologies could require additional regulatory approvals, such as zoning, spectrum, or orbital clearances, which may introduce uncertainty—specifically, installations must comply with Rhode Island Building Code and local ordinances, including height of building restrictions, limiting capacity of LEO installations to be roof mounted at some BSLs. Additional aesthetic local ordinances need to be considered as well.
 - **Non-priority technology restrictions:** PA has 80-86% tree canopy coverage, making low-earth orbit (LEO) internet an infeasible solution. LEO installations (antennae, communication equipment, and cable distribution systems) are required to be installed by electricians licensed by the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, making installations of LEO additionally restricted (per the RI Building Code Commission).
- **North Providence and Smithfield:** Original BEAD per location outlay: 11,166.00; Negotiated BEAD per location outlay: \$5,685.50
 - **Extraordinary circumstances:** The eligible BSLs in this project area represent the final one percent of underserved locations in the state. For this reason, Rhode Island would expect these locations to be some of the most difficult to deploy to, and thus most expensive. In addition, non-priority emerging technologies could require additional regulatory approvals, such as zoning, spectrum, or orbital clearances, which may introduce uncertainty—specifically, installations must comply with Rhode Island Building Code and local ordinances, including height of building restrictions, limiting capacity of LEO installations to be roof mounted at some BSLs. Additional aesthetic local ordinances need to be considered as well.
 - **Non-priority technology restrictions:** The Smithfield section of this PA has tree canopy coverage between 60% and 69%, making LEO internet an infeasible solution within that section of the PA. The PA throughout is additionally densely populated, with about 1,744 people per square mile. LEO installations (antennae, communication equipment, and cable distribution systems) are required to be installed by electricians licensed by the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, making installations of LEO additionally restricted (per the RI Building Code Commission).
- **East and West Greenwich:** Original BEAD per location outlay: 8,922.00; Negotiated BEAD per location outlay: \$5,685.47

- **Extraordinary circumstances:** Historic town centers mandate extended DEM/ Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) design reviews (4-6 months, \$2,000-\$5,000 in fees), with police details for roadside work adding 15%. Aged poles (many pre-1980) need 20-30% replacement at \$5,000 each. Further restrictions as the Big River Management Area is within the PA creates deployment considerations for all operators. In addition, non-priority emerging technologies could require additional regulatory approvals, such as zoning, spectrum, or orbital clearances, which may introduce uncertainty—specifically, installations must comply with Rhode Island Building Code and local ordinances, including height of building restrictions, limiting capacity of LEO installations to be roof mounted at some BSLs. Additional aesthetic local ordinances need to be considered as well.
- **Non-priority technology restrictions:** PA has between 70% and 86% tree canopy coverage, making LEO internet an infeasible solution. LEO installations (antennae, communication equipment, and cable distribution systems) are required to be installed by electricians licensed by the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, making installations of LEO additionally restricted (per the RI Building Code Commission).
- **Charlestown:** Original BEAD per location outlay: \$9,033.75; Negotiated BEAD per location outlay: \$6,313.61
 - **Extraordinary circumstances:** Adjacent to Tribal land. Because Tribal land is not public land, its adjacency to this project area limits the possible routes by which broadband may be deployed, thus reducing the efficiency of a network route and increasing the deployment costs. Coastal permitting via CRMC/DEM for wetlands involves directional drilling (\$30-\$40/LF) to avoid impacts, with seasonal restrictions (April-October bans) compressing timelines and raising labor overtime by 20%. Environmental studies cost \$10,000-\$20,000. In addition, non-priority emerging technologies could require additional regulatory approvals, such as zoning, spectrum, or orbital clearances, which may introduce uncertainty—specifically, installations must comply with Rhode Island Building Code and local ordinances, including height of building restrictions, limiting capacity of LEO installations to be roof mounted at some BSLs. Additional aesthetic local ordinances need to be considered as well.
 - **Non-priority technology restrictions:** PA has between 70% and 79% tree canopy coverage, making LEO internet an infeasible solution.
- **Narragansett:** Original BEAD per location outlay: \$8,691.00; Negotiated BEAD per location outlay: \$6,313.61
 - **Extraordinary circumstances:** Regulatory and environmental requirements due to coastal construction subject to Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) rules, wetland setbacks, and conservation easements as well as prohibition of aerial alternatives in several zones. In addition, non-priority emerging technologies could require additional regulatory approvals, such as zoning, spectrum, or orbital clearances, which may introduce uncertainty—specifically, installations must comply with Rhode Island Building Code and local ordinances, including height of building restrictions, limiting capacity of LEO

installations to be roof mounted at some BSLs. Additional aesthetic local ordinances need to be considered as well.

- **Non-priority technology restrictions:** PA has between 40 and 49% tree canopy coverage; this makes LEO internet an imperfect though feasible solution. The PA has additional household density with 1,030 residents per square mile in the winter months—which is about half of the town’s density in summer months), making LEO internet an infeasible solution. Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellites often produce coverage footprints with radii of several hundred kilometers, depending on altitude and beam-angle. For example, at ~550 km altitude and with moderate minimum elevation angles, a LEO satellite might have a coverage radius on the order of 500-600 km (~300-400 miles). As a result, the entire state of Rhode Island can be covered by a single LEO satellite (Rhode Island is smaller than the coverage radius of a typical LEO satellite: Rhode Island is 48 miles from North to South and 37 miles from East to West at its widest point) So for this PA (as with every PA in Rhode Island by nature of the LEO technology) the beam from the single LEO satellite would simultaneously encompass densely populated urban or suburban zones, in addition to relatively rural areas. That means the same beam serves many users in high-density areas (where demand is heavy) as well as users in lower density rural spots, leading to congestion on the shared capacity. This mixing—forced by large beam footprints—negatively impacts the ability to deliver consistently high speeds, low latency, and high reliability, even where geography might otherwise favor good service.
- Given both the threshold level of tree canopy coverage as well as the high-density of the PA, and the prohibition of aerial alternatives in certain areas of the PA, LEO is not a reliable solution that can, immediately, reliably deliver 100/20Mbps to all BSLs in the PA. LEO installations (antennae, communication equipment, and cable distribution systems) are required to be installed by electricians licensed by the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, making installations of LEO additionally restricted (per the RI Building Code Commission).
- **Rockville and Hopkinton:** Original BEAD per location outlay: \$11,082.74; Negotiated BEAD per location outlay: \$5,685.47
 - **Extraordinary circumstances:** Protected wetlands prevent aerial or tower deployments in this area, and result in longer routes. Underground trenching is required. This unavoidable ledge trenching at \$25-\$35/LF across rocky terrain adds 40%. In addition, non-priority emerging technologies could require additional regulatory approvals, such as zoning, spectrum, or orbital clearances, which may introduce uncertainty—specifically, installations must comply with Rhode Island Building Code and local ordinances, including height of building restrictions, limiting capacity of LEO installations to be roof mounted at some BSLs. Additional aesthetic local ordinances need to be considered as well.
 - **Non-priority technology restrictions:** PA has between 70% and 79% tree canopy coverage, making LEO internet an infeasible solution.
 - LEO installations (antennae, communication equipment, and cable distribution systems) are required to be installed by electricians licensed by the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, making installations of LEO additionally restricted (per the RI Building Code Commission).

Conclusion

The Corporation understands that Rhode Island's 65th percentile number is the lowest in the nation and \$2,500 and \$3,000 less than that of Connecticut and Massachusetts, respectively. Despite high levels of tree canopy coverage, rural communities, island and coastal wetland communities, marine dependencies and coastal regulations, historic sites, statewide regulatory burdens, and bedrock considerations demanding premium excavation techniques, Rhode Island's assigned 65th percentile number is additionally lower than Delaware, with a similar coastal topography, by \$1,500. This while understanding that costs in the Northeast are regularly 20-25% higher than costs for equivalent broadband projects in the Southern or Midwestern states (per benchmarks from the Fiber Broadband Association and U.S. Department of Commerce reports). If the Corporation's revised preliminary selections to serve these final, most difficult to reach locations were reviewed against the threshold numbers for our neighboring or comparable states, our numbers would be well within the ranges requested by the NTIA.