

# BEAD Program: Benefit of the Bargain Round 2

How to participate in the new round of the BEAD Program

September 26, 2025



California Public  
Utilities Commission

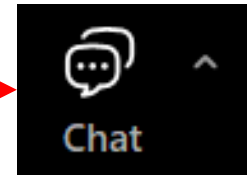
# Agenda

1. Overview of recent updates to the BEAD Program in California
2. Parameters of the Benefit of the Bargain Round 2
3. Priority Broadband applications
4. Project area design
5. Scoring rubric
6. Features of the portal
7. Final reminders

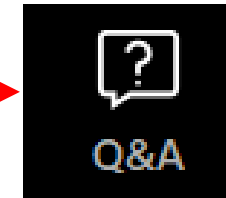
# Housekeeping

## Tips for getting the most out of this webinar:

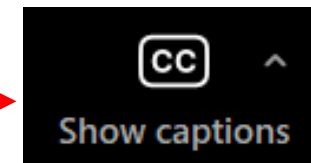
**Chat:** Keep an eye on the chat for helpful links and comments



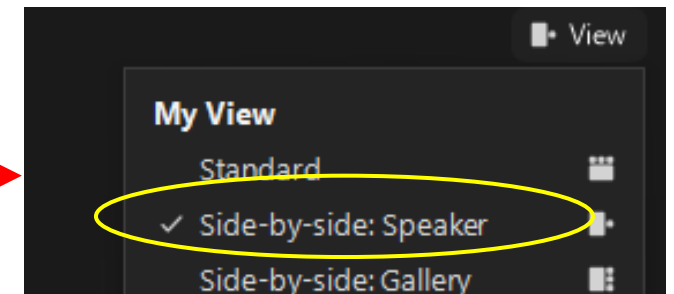
**Q&A:** Type questions in the Q&A



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# 1. Overview of recent updates to the BEAD Program in California

# Policy Notice

The National Telecommunications & Information Administration (NTIA) issued the “[BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice](#)” on June 6, 2025

The Policy Notice established the Benefit of the Bargain round(s) to invite further competition in the subgrantee selection process

The Policy Notice instituted significant changes to the BEAD Program which were incorporated in the Benefit of the Bargain Round 1

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### National Telecommunications and Information Administration

#### Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program: BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice

#### ACTION: Notice

#### SUMMARY:

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) provides funding for robust investment in American infrastructure projects. IIJA established the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program, which provides \$42.45 billion of funding to achieve high-speed broadband access throughout the United States. *See* Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, Division F, Title I, Section 60101, Public Law 117-58, 135 Stat. 429 (November 15, 2021) (codified at 47 U.S.C. § 1701 *et seq.*).

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), as the agency responsible for administering the BEAD Program, provides herein guidance for Eligible Entities (States, Territories, and the District of Columbia) to ensure American taxpayers obtain the greatest value for their broadband investment or “Benefit of the Bargain” under the BEAD Program.

**This Policy Notice modifies and replaces certain requirements outlined in the BEAD Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).**<sup>1</sup> Each Eligible Entity must comply with this Policy Notice to gain approval of its Final Proposal from the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information.<sup>2</sup>

# The CPUC received an extension allowing for an additional Benefit of the Bargain round

- NTIA **approved an extension** for the CPUC
- The additional time will further maximize the Benefit of the Bargain (BOTB) by allowing for a **second BOTB round of applications** for Priority Broadband Projects **between September 25 and October 3**
- The CPUC encourages **new and existing applicants** to submit Priority Broadband Project Applications in this second round to serve Project Area Units (PAU) that did not receive a Priority Project Application that could be awarded in accordance with the BEAD Notice of Funding Opportunity and the Restructuring Policy Notice
- To facilitate new applicants' participation in BOTB Round 2, the CPUC has also reopened the Prequalification Application; **Prequalification will remain open until October 2**

## 2. Parameters of the Benefit of the Bargain Round 2

# A significant number of the state's PAUs have been reopened for BOTB Round 2

**1** **Over 5,000 PAUs are eligible** for applications in BOTB Round 2; these PAUs and the associated BSL lists have been posted on the [CPUC's website](#)

**2** In BOTB Round 2, applications will only be accepted for these eligible, reopened PAUs

# New and pre-existing applicants are invited to participate in BOTB Round 2

1

**New and pre-existing applicants** can submit applications in BOTB Round 2

All applicants **must have submitted a Prequalification Application** in the previous or current Prequalification windows

2

Applicants with BOTB Round 1 applications that **contain only PAUs that have been reopened** for this round can choose to stand on their previous application or submit a new one that replaces it

3

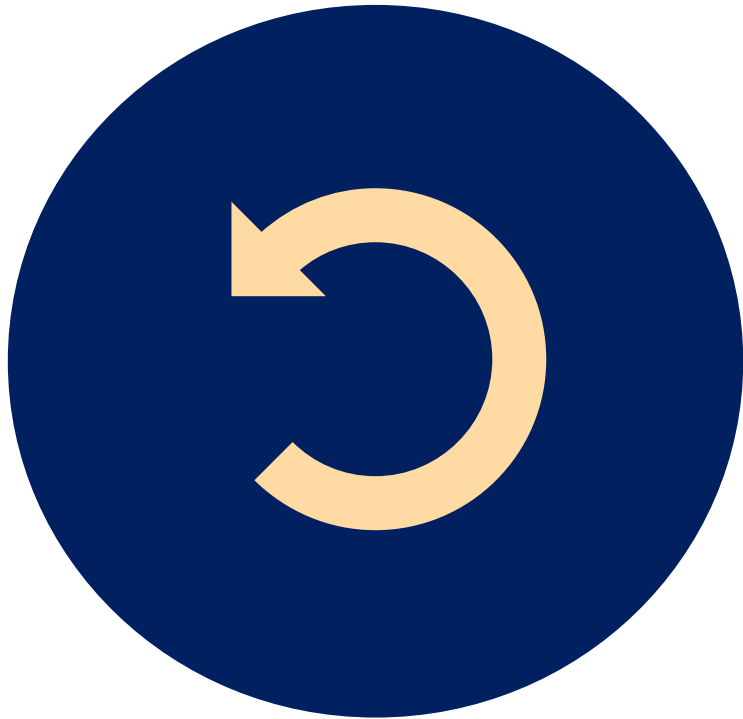
Applicants whose previous **applications contained PAUs that are not reopened** for this round can submit new applications for eligible PAUs in this round

# Previously submitted applications will be considered, if they include only eligible PAUs

- Any application from BOTB Round 1 that includes only PAUs that have been reopened for BOTB Round 2 can stand as submitted
  - These applications will be labeled as “Eligible for BOTB Round 2” in the portal
- Applicants are also welcome to submit new applications for these PAUs
  - If a new application is submitted, the original application(s) with which it overlaps will be disregarded
- If an application from BOTB Round 1 contains any PAUs that have not been reopened for this round, the application will not be considered in this round
  - These applications will be labeled as “Ineligible for BOTB Round 2” in the portal

# No time for application revisions

Applicants are advised to carefully review submissions to avoid rejection of applications



- Due to the timeline established in the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice, as extended by NTIA, applicants likely will not have an opportunity to correct deficiencies, supplement missing information, or modify pricing after application submission
- The CPUC urges applicants to make sure applications are complete, accurate, and compliant at the time of submission
- Applications that are not complete and accurate risk not being considered for award

# Timeline

Event	Date
<b>Prequalification</b>	
Application reopened	September 16, 2025
Application closes	October 2, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. PT
<b>Benefit of the Bargain Round 2 (Subgrantee Selection)</b>	
Application reopens	September 25, 2025
Application closes	October 3, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. PT
Comments on draft Resolution and Final Proposal due	Shortened comment period

# 3. Priority Broadband applications

# Determining which projects are “Priority”

## **The Policy Notice provides the following definition for “Priority Broadband Project”**

- The term “Priority Broadband Project” 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

## **BEAD applications will be evaluated against the “Priority Broadband” definition on a per-project basis**

### **All technologies are now eligible for Priority consideration**

- Fiber-optic, cable modem/hybrid fiber-coaxial, low-Earth orbit (LEO) satellite services, terrestrial fixed wireless (licensed, unlicensed, or hybrid spectrum)

# The CPUC is required to give preference to proposals that meet the definition of Priority



- To meet federal requirements, Priority Broadband Projects will be awarded ahead of non-Priority applications, even if the non-Priority applications have lower costs
- Whether a proposal meets the definition of Priority will be determined based on the evidence provided in the application and an evaluation by a team of broadband engineers

# Questions in the Project Application are intended to enable the CPUC to determine whether a proposed application is “Priority”

1

The Project Application requests information about each proposed project's network design to allow the CPUC to determine whether the application meets the definition of a Priority project

2

The application contains evidence templates for applicants to download and complete with necessary information about the proposed project's network design and specifications

# Priority project data templates

All applicants must complete and submit templates for each technology type employed in each proposed project

- Each template has an associated instruction manual; both will be linked within the portal
- Applicants that propose a mix of technologies for a project will need to complete a template for each technology

## Low-Earth Orbit Satellite

- Logical network diagram
- Access layer
- Customer premises equipment
- Gateway infrastructure & satellite uplinks
- Reliability & quality of service
- Performance calculations

## Unlicensed Fixed Wireless

- Logical network diagram
- Network assumptions, including interference
- Tower sites
- Sectors
- BSLs
- Uplink MCS table
- Downlink MCS table

## Licensed Fixed Wireless

- Logical network diagram
- Network assumptions
- Tower sites
- Sectors
- BSLs
- Uplink MCS table
- Downlink MCS table

## Hybrid Fiber-Coaxial

- Logical network diagram
- Access layer, including DOCSIS design
- Headend & internet backbone connectivity
- Reliability & quality of service
- Performance calculations

## Fiber-to-the-Premises

- Logical network diagram
- Access layer
- Headend & internet backbone connectivity
- Reliability & quality of service
- Performance calculations

# 4. Project area design

# The CPUC has maintained the same rules from BOTB Round 1 for project area design

1

Census block groups and Tribal lands remain as Project Area Units (PAU)

2

Applicants may combine multiple PAUs as long as they are adjacent to each other

3

Applicants may consider two PAUs to be adjacent so long as they do not have any other PAUs between them that contain eligible locations

# Each application requires a minimum coverage threshold of 60% of BSLs in the proposed project

- Applicants may remove select high-cost locations from a proposed application, but the total coverage percentage of eligible and fundable BSLs in the project must be at least 60%
  - Any location marked as “indicated” may be included in a proposal; however, those locations will not count toward the required 60% location threshold and are unlikely to receive BEAD funding due to pending enforceable commitment contract negotiations

# Excessive cost considerations



- The Policy Notice states that 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” (Policy Notice, pp. 11-12)
- However, NTIA has not formally defined what constitutes “excessive cost”
- Applicants are encouraged to propose cost-effective projects and avoid designing projects that may be considered excessively costly

# 5. Scoring rubric

# Scoring for Round 2 will be consistent with Round 1 of the Benefit of the Bargain process

**1**

According to the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice, the CPUC must select among Priority projects with the lowest cost based on “Minimal BEAD Program Outlay”

**2**

If there is only one Priority application in an area, it will be given preference above any non-Priority applications; it will not compete on cost with non-Priority applications

**3**

If a proposal's cost is within 15% of the lowest-cost proposal for the same general project area, NTIA's rules allow the CPUC to select based on secondary scoring criteria

# Overview of the scoring rubric



- Priority applications will only be compared with other Priority applications; Non-Priority applications will only be compared with other Non-Priority applications
- **Primary criteria:** Lowest cost based on “Minimal BEAD Program Outlay”
- **Secondary criteria** for proposals with project costs within 15% of the lowest-cost proposal for the same general project area:
  - Speed to deployment
  - Speed of network

# Secondary scoring rubric

<b>Speed to Deployment (maximum 10 points)</b>		<b>Points</b>
Project complete within 36 months of award		10
<b>Speed of Network (maximum 90 points)</b>		<b>Points</b>
<b>Download</b>	<b>Upload</b>	
≥ 2 Gbps	≥ 2 Gbps	90
≥ 1 Gbps and < 2 Gbps	≥ 1 Gbps and < 2 Gbps	75
≥ 500 Mbps and < 1 Gbps	≥ 500 Mbps and < 1 Gbps	50
≥ 100 Mbps and < 500 Mbps	≥ 100 Mbps and < 500 Mbps	25
≥ 100 Mbps	≥ 50 Mbps and < 100 Mbps	15
≥ 100 Mbps	< 50 Mbps	0

# 6. Features of the BEAD portal

# Applicants can select and deselect locations in the BEAD Portal

- Applicants will first select PAUs for their proposal; only PAUs that have been reopened for BOTB Round 2 will be eligible to be included
- The portal will automatically select all eligible BSLs in the selected PAUs, but locations can be removed from the PAUs in the application in Section 2 under the step “Review Locations”
  - Locations may be manually removed by clicking 'X' on the location from the list of locations in the selected project area
  - Locations that are selected will appear as a pink dot with a green circle around them
  - Deselecting locations will remove the green circle from the location point on the map
  - Alternatively, applicants may upload a CSV or XLSX file with the locations the applicant proposes to serve in the selected project area
- The portal will automatically calculate whether the number of eligible and fundable BSLs across an applicant's selected PAUs meets at least the minimum required 60% threshold; applicants must meet this threshold to proceed

# "Eligible" and "Ineligible" tags demonstrate which applications will be considered in BOTB Round 2

- In the list of BOTB Round 1 applications in the BEAD portal, each application will have a tag indicating whether the application is eligible for BOTB Round 2
- **"Eligible for BOTB Round 2"**: valid applications that will be considered in BOTB Round 2; applicants can stand on that application as it contains only PAUs open for submission.
- **"Ineligible for BOTB Round 2"**: applications that contain PAUs not reopened in BOTB Round 2 and therefore cannot be considered
- To update or replace an "Eligible for BOTB Round 2" application, submit a new application for one or more of the PAUs that are eligible for BOTB Round 2 from the previously submitted application
  - The new application would replace and nullify the previously submitted application(s) with which it overlaps PAUs.

# One question has been added to the application for BOTB Round 2

- The new question (Question 1.7) reads:
  - Please certify that the applicant understands that if this application overlaps with any of the applicant's previously submitted applications from BOTB Round 1 (i.e., includes one or more of the same PAUs), this application will replace and nullify the previously submitted application(s) for the purposes of BOTB Round 2.
- This is required to ensure applicants understand that if a new application overlaps on a PAU level with a previously submitted application, the previous application will be disregarded

# The CPUC has published materials for BOTB Round 2

The CPUC has published an updated Application Guide and data for BOTB Round 2; other previously published materials, including application templates, remain accurate and posted on the subgrantee selection page of the website

- BEAD Project Application Guide
- BEAD Benefit of the Bargain Scoring Rubric
- BEAD Eligible CAIs data
- BEAD Eligible BSLs data (unserved and underserved locations)
- BEAD Application checklist
- 11.18 Pro forma template
- 11.19 Budget Narrative Template
- 11.24 Letter of Commitment Template and 11.24C Surety Bond Template
- 11.28 Certifications and Licenses Template
- 11.7 Locations List Template (BSL) and Locations List Template (CAI)
- 11.9 Instructions for Submitting No BEAD Locations
- 11.9 Network Diagram Officer Attestation Template
- Technical templates and instruction manuals for LEO, ULFW, LFW, HFC, and Fiber evidence submissions

# 7. Final reminders

# How to prepare and participate

1

Submit a Prequalification Application, if not submitted previously, before submitting a Project Application

The Prequalification window will close on October 2, 2025

2

Review the PAUs that will be eligible in BOTB Round 2 and other application materials to plan your application

3

Make sure applications are complete, accurate, and compliant at the time of submission

**Send questions about the BEAD  
Program to:**

[BEADgrant@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:BEADgrant@cpuc.ca.gov)

Questions will be compiled as they come in and responses published in our Frequently Asked Questions.



## Resources:

- [NTIA BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice](#)
- [CPUC BEAD Subgrantee Selection](#)





# California Public Utilities Commission