

# Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (B.E.A.D.)

Local Planning Grant Program

# What is B.E.A.D.?

- Intention is through various planning grants – specifically county is to gather data /input to aid in the development of the Wisconsin's BEAD and Digital Equity Plan which will direct the deployment of federal dollars designated through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law over the next 5 years – Plan is due in August
- State “support/sponsor”
  - PSC
  - UW- EX
  - WEDC/Office of Rural Prosperity (ORP)

# Grant Process

- Short time period from release of PSC, Opt In and allocation of planning grant.
- Purpose of grant is to provide support in planning for future broadband efforts and assist in the state in developing a full plan
- Process to distribute future federal funds
- County had two options
  - Sole opt in
  - Partner with Redo (MADREP) and receive a 10% increase – so about \$20,171
    - They will serve as fiscal agent.

# Key Timelines

- Grant Instructions (Note MadRep will be the applicant on our behalf)
  - April 3 – Grant Instructions released
  - April 28 – Deadline for submitting Questions and Assistance
  - May 1 – Applications due
  - Application will request up to three eligible planning activities that will be completed during the performance period – 1 Feb 2023 – 1 May 2025 with a short description of the intended outcomes or deliverables
  - By June 19, 2023 interim report submitted.

# Preliminary Budget

- Due by May 1 – Placeholder budget – full allocation in “other”
- June 19<sup>th</sup> – detailed grant budget by cost categories
  - Contract/Consultants
  - Labor
  - Training
  - Travel
  - Supplies
  - Other

# Initial Deliverables Due – June 19

- Convene an initial planning group or provide documentation of an existing group
- Begin outreach to stakeholder in county related to broadband planning
- Identify a preliminary regional broadband vision and goals
- Identify key barriers and opportunities to internet for all in county
- Develop a detailed budget by cost categories

# Eligible Projects/Activities

- Research and data collection, including initial identification of unserved locations and underserved locations consistent with the rules, regulations, and processes the Federal Communication Commission has established for making these determinations in the Broadband DATA Maps.
- Publications, outreach, and communications support related to broadband and digital equity planning.
- Providing technical assistance to potential subgrantees (i.e. providers and communities), including through workshops and events; that support the development of the state 5-year action plan.
- Training for employees of political subdivisions of Wisconsin, and related staffing capacity or consulting or contracted support to effectuate the goals of the BEAD Program.
- Asset mapping across the county and/or region to catalogue broadband adoption, affordability, equity, access and deployment activities occurring within Wisconsin.
- Conducting surveys of unserved, underserved, and underrepresented communities to better understand barriers to internet adoption.
- Costs associated with meeting the local coordination requirements including capacity building at the local and regional levels or contracted support.

# Examples of Allowable Activities that may be proposed

- Conduct outreach to improve and challenge the National Broadband Map.
- Hire new staff or allocate existing staff time to broadband planning; including but not limited to embedding broadband into regional and economic plans, or other community planning activities.
- Allocate staff time to participate in technical assistance workshops or webinars.
- Convening industry stakeholders to identify strategies related to financing broadband or preparing workforce.
- Hire or allocate staff to refine or review permitting processes related to broadband deployment.
- Training staff, elected officials, or local broadband champions to improve their knowledge of broadband, internet adoption, or federal grant administration.
- Host and document event(s) to discuss broadband and barriers to adoption.
- Purchase software licenses or data (mapping software, speed-tests) related to broadband planning, permitting, or adoption.

# Examples of Allowable Activities that may be proposed

- Conduct surveys or promote existing surveys of citizens on their broadband needs and barriers.
- Hire or allocate staff time to perform analyses of the survey results, state and federal maps, data,  
and existing resources related to broadband adoption.
- Send flyers advertising broadband listening sessions and digital equity events.
- Hosting meetings with potential internet service provider partners.
- Get outreach materials translated into other languages.
- Hire translators and/or interpreters and/or childcare providers to support Wisconsinites' participation in planning meetings.
- Create models for best practice public private partnerships for broadband deployment.
- Any other activities proposed by the applicant that are allowable by the funding and approved by the Commission.

# Census Process

- Census to help gather data through a Qualtrics Survey Tools
- April 10 – counties will receive e-mail to participate
- May 15 – County Census Deadline

# Technical Support Items

- GeoPartners speedtesting contract – Live now and we have access; need to develop a plan to launch, publicize and manage
- Regional Technical Assistance – Format TBD
  - What we have heard:
    - Meeting overload
    - Clarity
    - Include partners when discussing
  - Broadband Education
  - Capacity
  - How to address varying levels of needs
  - Leverage subject matter expertise in region Leverage ED and planning initiatives
    - Workforce / Tourism
  - Funding
- Regional toolkit
  - UW –EX – has not been released – later this week

# County's Next Steps

- Further refine/identify key critical path items upon receipt of additional information from state sponsor agencies (PSC, UW-Ext, WEDC ORP); develop action task list
- Identify top three planning tasks to work with MadRep to submit proposed budget
- Continue engagement with partners
- Community outreach/information - Website

