

# **AGENDA**

## **Broadband Working Group**

### **Videoconference OR**

**Jefferson County Courthouse  
311 S. Center Ave, Room C2003  
Jefferson, WI 53549**

Friday, October 20, 2023

2:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87697754337?pwd=cnVKMzd0TkZFY3RPRHpxMW5kTGxVdz09>

Meeting ID: 876 9775 4337

Passcode: Meet2022

Dial by your location: 1 312 626 6799

### **Committee Members**

Curtis Backlund, Joan Fitzgerald, Matthew Foelker, Jeff Johns, Richard Jones, Robert Preuss, Amy Rinard

1. Call to order
2. Roll call (establish a quorum)
3. Certification of compliance with the Open Meetings Law
4. Communications
5. Public Comment (Members of the public who wish to address the Committee on specific agenda items must register their request at this time)
6. Approval of Minutes from July 27, 2023 Broadband Working Group
7. Approval of the agenda
8. Discussion and Possible Action related to planning activities under the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Planning Grants
9. Update on Regional Broadband Conference
10. Discussion on new Internet Service Providers
11. Update on Broadband Projects
12. Discussion and possible action related to American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding and Broadband
13. Discuss vision, goals, priorities and planning
14. Discussion of next steps
15. Discussion and possible action on future meeting dates and agenda items
16. Adjourn

A quorum of any Jefferson County Committee, Board, Commission or other body, including the Jefferson County Board of Supervisors, may be present at this meeting.

Individuals requiring special accommodations for attendance at the meeting should contact the County Administrator 24 hours prior to the meeting at 920-674-7101 so appropriate arrangements can be made.

**JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD  
COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**July 27, 2023**

**Broadband Working Group**

**1. Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order by Fitzgerald at 2:00 p.m.

**2. Roll Call**

**Broadband Working Group Members present:** Curtis Backlund, Joan Fitzgerald, Matthew Foelker, Jeff Johns, Richard Jones, Robert Preuss, Amy Rinard

Others Present: Ben Wehmeier, County Administrator, Michael Luckey, Assistant to the County Administrator; Supervisor Anita Martin

Others Present via ZOOM: Gene Dalhoff, MadRep; Tom Lieberherr, Gary Henshue, Ken Baehler, Brian Madl, Edge Broadband; Udovich, Highway; Jason Hafenstein.

**3. Certification of compliance with Open Meeting Law Requirements**

Wehmeier certified compliance with the Open Meetings Law

**4. Communications**

None

**5. Public Comment**

None

**6. Approval of the June 6, 2023 Broadband Working Group minutes**

Draft minutes were provided for review.

Motion by Backlund /Fitzgerald to approve the June 6, 2023 Broadband Working Group minutes as printed. Motion passed 6-0. (Jones abstained)

**7. Approval of the agenda**

Item 10 was moved up to accommodate presenters.

**8. Discuss vision, goals, priorities and planning**

Baehler shared documents related to the Bead Budget including plans for submitting the grants.

The workgroup members support Wehmeier working with Baehler to continue planning. No action taken.

**9. Discussion and possible action related to planning activities under the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Planning Grants**

Luckey gave an update on his work on the project. Data collection flyers were sent to school districts, newspapers, presented at the town meeting, and sent to town chairs and clerks. Working on updating the webpage. Dalhoff gave an update on the BEAD Grant. The information from Jefferson County has been submitted to the PSC. Grants may be awarded in 2024.

Motion by Backlund/Foelker to continue to work with Baehler on planning for the grant. Motion passed 7-0.

**10. Update on Broadband Projects**

Lieberherr and Madl gave updates on Bug Tussell and Edge Broadband projects. No action taken.

**11. Discussion of next steps**

The next Broadband Working Group meeting will be scheduled when needed. No action taken.

**12. Adjourn**

Motion by Foelker/Backlund to adjourn at 3:26 p.m. Motion passed 7-0.

# THE BROADBAND EQUITY ACCESS AND DEPLOYMENT (BEAD) PROGRAM

## PROGRAM DETAILS FOR APPLICANTS

**Funding pool**  
\$42.45B

### Program objective

Aims to close the access gap for unserved and underserved areas and community anchor institutions with grants for U.S. States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and territories

### Program highlights


Entities eligible to apply for this program include:


- All 50 U.S. States
- The District of Columbia and Puerto Rico
- Other U.S. Territories: U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands


Example eligible uses of funds include:

- ☆ Planning for deployment of the Internet
- ☆ Improving internet network infrastructure
- ☆ Installing the Internet in multi-unit buildings
- ☆ Implementing adoption and digital equity programs
- ☆ Workforce development and training

### Project prioritization process

 **First, Eligible Entities must serve all unserved locations** (incl. multi-tenant buildings) without access to reliable internet and with download speeds <25 Mbps, upload speeds <3 Mbps, latency < 100 ms

 **Second, Eligible Entities must serve all underserved locations** without access to reliable internet and with download speeds <100 Mbps, upload speeds <20 Mbps, latency <100 ms

 **Next, NTIA strongly urges Eligible Entities serve Eligible Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs)** (e.g., school, library, hospital) that facilitate greater use of high-speed internet service by vulnerable populations and have download speed <1 Gbps

### Project selection criteria

Eligible Entities must design a fair, open, and competitive process that first prioritizes and selects among **Priority Broadband Projects** that use end-to-end **fiber-optic technology** and second selects among **non-fiber projects**

#### Primary Criteria

*Must collectively account for 75%+ of total points available*

- Lowest program cost
- Affordability
- Fair labor practices

#### Secondary Criteria

*Must be given some weight*


- Timeframe for service to begin on funded networks
- Network speed & latency (*non-Priority projects only*)


#### Optional Additional Factors


*NTIA encourages Eligible Entities to include; other factors may be considered*


- Workforce development
- Open access
- Local & Tribal coordination

### Key requirements for Eligible Entities


 **Matching:** Broadband deployment projects require ≥25% match, which can come from a variety of sources, except in high-cost areas

 **Local coordination:** Provide opportunities for meaningful input from diverse stakeholders, incl. but not limited to political subdivisions and Tribes submitting plans for consideration and commenting on drafts


 **Challenge process:** Ensure a transparent, evidence-based, and expeditious challenge process for stakeholders to challenge service levels at a location


 **Labor and workforce:** Promote fair labor practices and advance workforce development objectives

### Key requirements for subgrantees

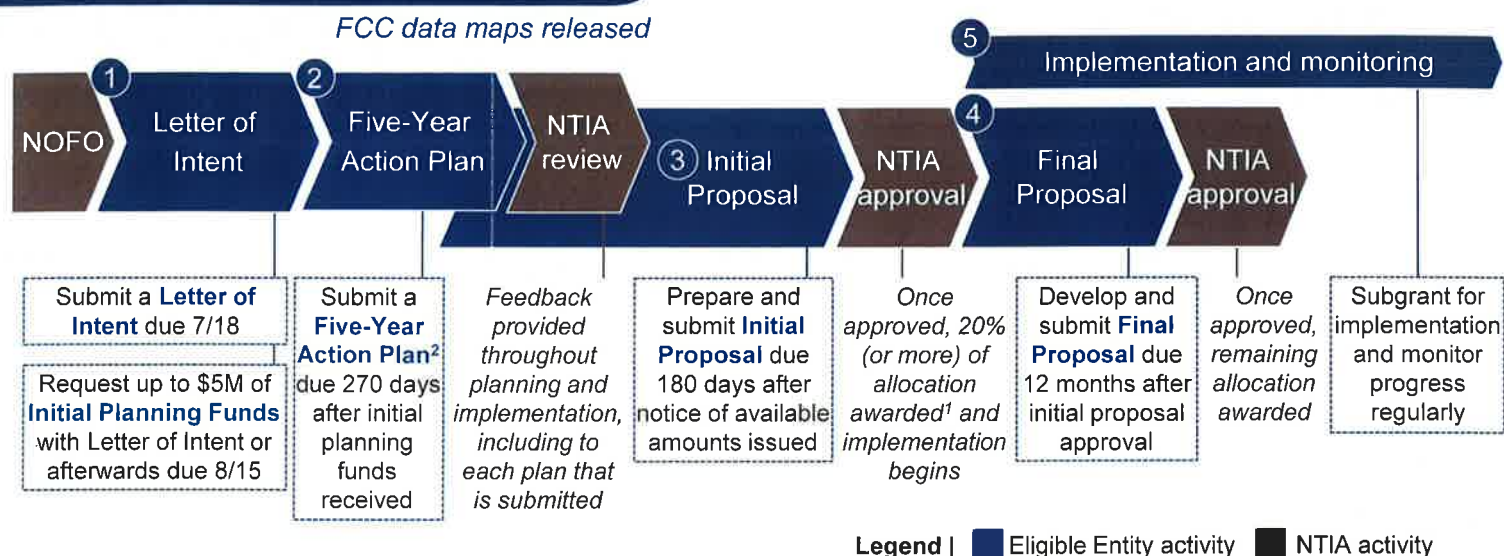
 **Low-cost broadband service option example:** At least 1 low-cost plan (e.g., ≤\$30 incl. taxes/fees, ≥100 download speed, ≥20 Mbps upload speed, ≥100 ms)

 **Time to deploy:** Within 4 years of receipt of funds

 **Performance:** ≥100 Mbps download speed, ≥20 Mbps upload speed, latency ≤100 ms, and ≤48 hours of outages over any 365-day period

 **Access to service:** Provide service with reasonable and non-discriminatory terms and conditions

## Application process and key milestones



## Required components for submissions across the application process

<b>Letter of Intent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statement of intention to participate</li> <li>Identification administering entity office</li> <li>Identification of main point of contact at that office</li> <li>Request to access initial planning funds</li> </ul>
<b>Five-Year Action Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Details of the <b>existing broadband programs</b></li> <li>Description of <b>funding available</b> for deployment</li> <li>Description of <b>existing efforts federally funded</b></li> <li>List of <b>employees</b> assisting implementation</li> <li>Known/potential <b>barriers and plans to address</b></li> <li><b>Asset inventory</b> cataloguing broadband activities</li> <li>Details of <b>external engagement</b> processes</li> <li><b>Broadband availability and adoption data</b></li> <li>Identification of <b>local broadband service needs</b></li> <li><b>Comprehensive plan</b> for providing reliable, affordable broadband</li> <li><b>Digital equity and inclusion</b> needs, goals, and strategies</li> <li><b>Alignment</b> with other existing and planned priorities</li> <li><b>Technical assistance</b> and capacity needed</li> </ul>
<b>Initial Proposal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline of long-term objectives</li> <li>Support of local planning efforts</li> <li>List of <b>existing efforts</b> to deploy broadband</li> <li>Certification that <b>local coordination</b> was conducted</li> <li>Identification of <b>un- and underserved locations</b></li> <li>Description of how <b>definition of CAI</b> was applied</li> <li>Detailed plan to conduct <b>challenge process</b></li> <li>Detailed <b>plan to award subgrants</b>, including Extremely High Cost per Location Threshold</li> <li>Explanation of preferences for <b>non-deployment eligible activities</b></li> <li>List of initiatives EE will implement without subgrant</li> <li>Detail of labor and workforce activities</li> <li>Plan for labor related subgrantee selection criteria</li> <li>Support of minority- and women-owned businesses</li> <li>Steps to <b>reduce costs and barriers</b> to deployment</li> <li>Assessment of <b>climate threats &amp; mitigation methods</b></li> <li>Description of <b>low-cost plans</b> to be offered</li> <li>Description of intended use of <b>20% funding</b></li> <li>Disclosures around plans to <b>waive laws</b> that restrict public sector participation</li> <li>Certification of intent to comply with requirements</li> </ul>
<b>Final Proposal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Details of outcome of <b>subgrantee selection process</b></li> <li><b>Timeline</b> for implementation</li> <li>Process for oversight and accountability</li> <li>Certification that <b>local coordination</b> was conducted</li> <li>Description of the results of the <b>challenge process</b></li> <li>Certification that it will serve all <b>unserved locations</b>, if seeking to fund underserved, CAI, or other projects</li> <li>Description of <b>non-deployment</b> planned uses of funds</li> <li>Means by which subgrantees were selected for <b>non-deployment eligible activities</b></li> <li>Description of efforts to support <b>non-traditional provider participation</b></li> <li>Implementation status of plans from Initial Proposal</li> <li>Subgrantee plans to warrant <b>Priority Broadband Project status</b></li> <li>Subgrantee plans to warrant <b>benefits in selection</b></li> <li><b>Environmental documentation</b> and plan to comply w/ environment and national historic preservation reqs</li> <li>Plans to deploy to <b>Un-/Underserved Service Projects &amp; Resolution of Consent</b> for projects on Tribal Lands</li> <li>Description of <b>unsuccessful applications</b> that were affected by laws of the Eligible Entity</li> </ul>



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## What is Internet Adoption?

Is Your County including ALL citizens in its broadband planning? Those of us who are actively working to get broadband to all communities of Wisconsin frequently talk about the 3 A's of broadband: *Access*, *Affordability* and *Adoption*. And while *Access* or getting infrastructure built to enable you to connect to the internet is the most pressing issue of the moment, I would ask if you are considering ALL of your local residents in your planning efforts?

The old catch phrase “build it and *they* will come” does not work in the instance of broadband. Why not? To begin with, many people are unable to *afford* broadband on a sustainable basis. In 2022, Consumer Reports conducted a nationwide survey of 21,000 consumers' broadband bills and found that the median monthly internet bill was \$74.99. Studies have shown that rural areas in particular have the highest broadband pricing and a recently completed analysis from a consultant for the Wisconsin Public Service Commission showed that monthly internet pricing in rural areas is 15% higher than in urban areas. So, on the pathway to *adoption*, one critical goal becomes making broadband *affordable* for ALL consumers.

Residents who are eligible can find assistance in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) at <https://www.fcc.gov/acp>, a federally administered program, which provides a \$30 per month – and now in some designated areas \$75 per month - boost to the monthly broadband bill. As of August 2023, 380,000 of Wisconsin's 894,000 eligible households are registered for the ACP, or 41 percent.

A good way to find out how many people are subscribing to broadband in your area is to find out the take rate (subscription rate) from local internet service providers (ISP's). That is useful information for your area. If people are not subscribing to broadband, why not? Is it because they can't afford it? Is it because they don't have digital devices to connect to the internet? Or do they lack the digital skills (know-how) to use those devices? Those are the primary questions of digital *adoption*, the third A. The higher the *adoption* rate, the greater the return on investment for an ISP and the greater the boost to the local and state economy.

Internet *adoption* is about getting ALL people connected (except for the very few who choose otherwise). This last A is hard because it comes with the necessary additional task of teaching digital skills to those without. Yet, it is our responsibility to complete the job of *adoption*. To me, teaching those digital skills is at once the end game of adoption and the end game of broadband. It has left us with a responsibility, in a sense, to finish the job of broadband.

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At present, libraries are a favorite location to learn digital skills because they are ubiquitous, are served with reliable internet, trusted by the public, and often have additional computer terminals and staff that know how to use a computer.

Besides libraries, nonprofits such as United Way and Wisconsin Literacy, recognizing the social and economic value of teaching people digital skills, have created and funded positions to do exactly that. Wisconsin Literacy's tutor-trainer is Madison-based, and the United Way has people in the Milwaukee area and in Eau Claire that are involved in teaching digital skills to people. At present, Forest County is the only truly rural county that has a person to teach digital skills. That position is funded by a three-year grant from the National Digital Inclusion Alliance <https://www.digitalinclusion.org/>.

Increasingly, organizations and counties nationwide and in Wisconsin are considering hiring individuals who are good teachers of digital skills. To obtain more specifics about these developing programs, I will write a future piece detailing the efforts of these trailblazers at <https://economicdevelopment.extension.wisc.edu/topics/broadband/>. They are a critical piece of helping with internet adoption, helping to finish the job of broadband.