

# STATE PREPARATION FOR BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW BROADBAND GRANT PROGRAMS

## Establish and resource a broadband program

These will likely look different state by state, for example, it could be a discrete office in the State government, a program under a related office (e.g., under the CIO, an Economic or Community Development Office) or an independent broadband authority.

- ✓ Think strategically about the best location within state government, including where you can leverage expertise and shared services
- ✓ Provide adequate resources to maximize the impact of new funding and ensure fiscal accountability. Funding and staffing this office will be critical to success
- ✓ Ensure broad awareness across all relevant internal stakeholders (i.e., departments, agencies, offices) that this will be a coordinated effort
- ✓ Be ready to designate your lead administering entity for Digital Equity Plans within 60 days of funding guidance

## Begin talking with key stakeholders and planning for continuous engagement

To succeed, inclusion of all relevant groups in the process is critical – for both broadband infrastructure deployment and digital equity efforts. Stakeholder to engage include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Local Political Subdivisions
- ✓ Broadband Providers of all types, e.g., commercial, non-profit, municipal
- ✓ Underrepresented Populations
- ✓ Community Organizations
- ✓ Trusted Community Leaders
- ✓ Community Anchor Institutions

## Engage with Broadband Availability and Adoption Data

Successful planning and program deployment will depend upon effective data collection and analysis.

- ✓ Collect relevant data and information to inform mapping and planning efforts
- ✓ Identify existing data sources that can be leveraged (e.g., NTIA's Broadband Indicators of Need Map, the American Community Survey, National Broadband Availability Map)
- ✓ Capture data on infrastructure availability/access as well as adoption and use
- ✓ Develop (and/or update) a comprehensive broadband map
- ✓ Funding for BEAD is proportional to number of unserved locations in each state

## Evaluate state permitting, dig-once and other broadband related practices

Investigate paths to streamlining existing processes and putting in place mechanisms that can enable more cost-effective implementation in the future.

- ✓ Streamline any state and local permitting, or regulatory practices, that support or enable broadband deployment
- ✓ Streamline state-level environmental and historic preservation procedures
- ✓ Ensure relevant states offices are well-resourced to promote effective review processes
- ✓ Identify and implement collaborative processes (e.g., dig-once) that can facilitate effective deployment
- ✓ Enable access and use of existing infrastructure and rights of way to reduce the cost and build time of future deployments

## Place affordability along with access at the heart of your state plans

Enabling access to critical infrastructure is key to closing the digital divide, but access alone won't solve the problem. Promoting adoption and affordability is critical to closing the digital divide.

- ✓ When planning for broadband infrastructure, consider how to promote affordable access and adoption
- ✓ Work with all key state stakeholders to ensure a common focus on affordable access to broadband across all planning and implementation activities
- ✓ Leverage NTIA technical assistance support on infusing affordability in the development of strategic plans
- ✓ Consider the role and design of the low-cost service requirement (per the statute) under the BEAD program
- ✓ Think creatively to develop multi-faceted strategies with a diverse set of broadband providers to drive affordability holistically across your programs

### Want to learn more?

To stay up to date on the latest available information, including Notices of Funding Opportunity when released, visit our website.



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