



BEAD Technical Assistance funding applications

August 1, 2024

Responses Due August 23, 2024

Project Name: Broadband Equity Access, and Deployment Technical Assistance for Counties

Company Name: Washington State Association of Counties

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1. Background/Introduction

Washington state is set to receive \$1.2B to bring broadband service to all unserved and underserved residents. The Department of Commerce, through the State Broadband Office (WSBO), has developed a five-year action plan and state digital equity plan to establish eligibility for federal funding to deliver significant investments for expanding broadband access and to help close the digital divide in Washington. This means that counties and their partners will have to work diligently to identify smart, efficient ways of deploying broadband infrastructure to ensure the largest possible number of residents can be served with this funding.

Applications for Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) grants will begin in early fall. Counties may be planning to apply either as a subgrantee (that is, directly apply for BEAD funds) or instead of applying directly, be active participants in another subgrantee's application process by providing important policy-level considerations to the application.

During the last legislative session, the Department of Commerce was given funding for broadband technical assistance. The State Broadband Office has decided to contract with WSAC to provide this funding to counties to assist them in planning for BEAD grant proposals and broadband deployment in their communities.

This memo is to inform you of that opportunity, and to ask that if you, or another eligible jurisdiction in your county, would like to receive this funding, to please fill out the application included within this document.

2. Project Goals and Scope of Services

The funding WSAC has available supports counties in planning for BEAD grant proposals and broadband deployment in their communities and offers when appropriate, technical assistance for preparing BEAD applications. This support includes county collaborations with Ports, PUDs, Tribes, and private or non-profit entities as they design, develop, and coordinate broadband networks.

Our contract with the Department of Commerce outlines the following allowable activities. Proposals must include activities that fall within these eligible criteria. Expenditures that fall outside these categories may not be eligible for reimbursement.

- Aiding public entities and community members in designing local broadband networks that maximize grant awards for the broadest connectivity of residents and anchor institutions.
- Creating alignment between community plans and grant applications.
- The evaluation of project applications, prior to public entities submitting them to WSBO.
- Preparing BEAD grant applications, including, but not limited to, engineering design, letter of credit applications, and compilation of project leadership resumes.
- Helping to establish and coordinate necessary broadband workforce development initiatives that align with the WSBO's goals.
- Assisting public entities in negotiating public-private partnerships.
- Providing technical network expertise and understanding of industry practices to public entities not familiar with the telecommunications sector.
- Providing a neutral voice when educating policymakers and community leaders, for the application.
- Providing coordination of community efforts to maximize the outcomes of other broadband grants in conjunction with BEAD applications.

Approximately \$900,000 is available for reimbursements of county costs. We anticipate receiving more requests than we have available funds. Individual counties may apply for reimbursement of costs up to \$50,000. All proposals will be reviewed, and an amount of funding will be awarded based on the evaluation criteria noted below. If a requested amount cannot be fully funded, counties will not receive less than \$20,000. Counties may take a regional approach and submit a combined proposal. In those cases, the maximum award amount will be increased depending on the number of counties applying together.

3. Application Submission Dates

All applications related to this funding request must be submitted by **August 23rd at 5:00 p.m.**

Please use this link to complete the online application form.

<https://form.jotform.com/241936955071968>

There will be an Application webinar on **August 12th from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. via Zoom** to discuss application and eligibility questions. You may send in your questions ahead of time if you'd like, and those will be answered during the meeting. We will document the Q&A and make it available within two days of the conference.

Zoom link for Application Webinar:

<https://wsac-org.zoom.us/j/87817240312?pwd=9ecpad3UIKKb1Zk8XFqz8H8fBSizmK.1&from=addon>

Final selection and awarding notice is anticipated no later than September 6th. The funding is set to expire on June 30, 2025.

4. Elements of the Application

WSAC created an application divided into four sections to ensure we have the necessary information to confirm that the project's scope meets the funding criteria.

Section 1 – Basic Information

Provide a title for the project, the amount requested and contact information for leads of the project. If there are multiple organizations working together, such as a county, Port, and subcontractor, please list lead contact names for each of those entities. If there are multiple organizations involved, please describe the nature of what each organization is doing in the project. If you are a county that is working independently and would like to request assistance from another agency, please describe the need in this box.

Section 2 – Project Details

2a. Use this section to describe your project in detail. We need to understand the scope of work and deliverables. You may summarize here if you intend to upload detailed project information and supporting documentation, such as a subcontract, in the next section.

2b. This section is for you to illustrate how your project aligns with the allowable activities that can be funded through this program.

2c. We understand that you may have already started this work in your county and these funds can help pay for the remainder of the work. Please use this section to describe your current accomplishments. If you have not started any work, you can leave this section blank.

2d. Use this section to explain how the funding will be used to support your project. If you are leveraging other funds please describe. Also, please explain any impacts a shortfall of funding may have on this project.

Section 3 – Additional Information

Please upload any other documentation you have regarding the project that will help support and explain your project and funding request.

Section 4 – Project Budget

Please upload information about your project budget and funding request. We do not have a prescribed budget format, but provide details that can be supported with documentation when requesting reimbursement if funded. Eligible costs for reimbursement will be considered from July 1, 2024.

5. Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on their relevance to approved activities and the number of applications versus the number of funds available. The evaluation may also consider the significance of the impact on the area, the number of underserved areas addressed, and the utilization of other resources. WSAC may contact the applicants during the evaluation process to gain a better understanding of the proposals.

6. Miscellaneous

These applications do not commit WSAC to fund any proposals submitted, nor is WSAC liable for any costs incurred in the preparation or research of the application. Submittal of a proposal does not constitute a contract with WSAC. The awards will not be final until WSAC has approval from the Department of Commerce.