

2022 Federal Broadband Funding Overview

CETF Board of Expert Advisors

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Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)

Background

- On November 15th, 2021, President Biden signed into law the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)
- BIL includes \$65 billion to improve high-speed Internet access and affordability.
- The broadband funding in the bill is aimed at building high-speed Internet networks, helping low-income families pay for service, and a digital equity program.
- The BIL will provide additional funding to three current broadband programs
 - The EBB program (now called the Affordable Connectivity Program or ACP),
 - ReConnect
 - Tribal Broadband Connectivity Grant Program
- BIL will also fund new broadband programs that prioritize unserved and underserved areas with deployed speeds of at least 100/20 Mbps.

2022 Federal Broadband Funding Opportunities

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)

Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program (BEAD)

Agency	NTIA (Dept of Commerce)
Amount	\$42.45B
Funding Type/ Recipient	The eligible entity is defined as a State. Subgrants to cooperatives, non-profits, PPPs, private company, public or private utilities and Local gov'ts
Program Description	States would use grant funds to competitively award subgrants for qualifying broadband infrastructure, mapping, and adoption projects. Funding is available to States for planning and administrative expenses. Subgrants may be distributed by States and in accordance with a five-year action plan to be developed by the States and approved by NTIA.
Funding Details	Each State would receive a minimum of \$100 million to support planning efforts including building capacity in state broadband offices and outreach and coordination with local communities.
Due Date	NOFO expected by mid-May 2022 (could slip to June). Expect funding will not be awarded to subgrantees and begin flowing until sometime in 2023.
Keys to a Competitive Proposal	The priority for funding is for providing broadband to unserved areas (those below 25/3 Mbps), followed by underserved areas (those below 100/20 Mbps), and then serving community anchor institutions (1/1 Gbps).

Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program

Agency	NTIA (Dept of Commerce)
Amount	\$1B
Funding Type/ Recipient	Eligible applicants include States, political subdivisions of a State, tribal governments, technology companies, electric utilities, utility cooperatives, public utility districts, telecommunications companies, telecommunications cooperatives, nonprofit foundations, nonprofit corporations, nonprofit institutions, nonprofit associations, regional planning councils, Native entities, or economic development authorities.
Program Description	Establishes and funds a \$1 billion program for the construction, improvement or acquisition of middle mile infrastructure. The purpose of the grant program is to expand and extend middle mile infrastructure to reduce the cost of connecting unserved and underserved areas to the internet backbone.
Funding Details	Unlike the BEAD Program, the middle mile program will not flow through the States; applicants will apply directly to NTIA for funds. \$1 billion for fiscal years 2022 through 2026 Federal Share Limited to 70 Percent. The amount of a middle mile grant may not exceed 70% of the total project cost.
Due Date	TBD
Keys to a Competitive Proposal	Prioritize projects that: (i) leverage existing rights-of-way, assets, and infrastructure (as noted above); (ii) enable the connection of unserved anchor institutions, including Tribal anchor institutions; (iii) facilitate the development of carrier-neutral interconnection facilities; and (iv) improve redundancy and resilience while reducing regulatory and permitting barriers.

Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program

Agency	NTIA (Dept of Commerce)
Amount	\$2B
Funding Type/ Recipient	Tribal government and entities; Entities eligible for TBCP grants include tribal governments, tribal organizations, TCUs, the Native Hawaiian Community, and Native Corporations.
Program Description	The Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program provides grants for broadband infrastructure deployment; affordable broadband programs; distance learning, telehealth, digital inclusion efforts; and broadband adoption activities
Funding Details	Due Date: TBD
More Information	<p>A NTIA program previously implemented under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021. The TBCP directs funding to tribal governments to be used for broadband deployment on tribal lands, as well as for telehealth, distance learning, broadband affordability, and digital inclusion.</p> <p>Eligible uses include planning (e.g., feasibility), broadband infrastructure deployment (e.g., construction), broadband adoption/digital literacy/tech support, digital skills training (e.g., science, technology, engineering, arts and math, Workforce Development), Devices/equipment (e.g., laptops, hotspots), public connectivity/computer access, research and/or evaluation, data and/or mapping, smart communities/cities/regions, telehealth.</p>

Website: <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/resources/grant-programs/tribal-broadband-connectivity-program>

State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program

Agency	NTIA (Dept of Commerce)
Amount	\$2B
Program Description	Support efforts to achieve digital equity, promote digital inclusion activities and spur greater broadband adoption among covered populations. This program is divided into two parts: (1) Planning Phase and (2) Adoption Phase
Planning Phase	States will apply for the planning grants, and Commerce will approve the completed plans before releasing the larger grant funding to the states. Planning Funding: \$60M to individual states (approx. \$1.2M per state) The planning grants will go toward the creation of digital equity plans.
Adoption Phase	Grant funding will be allocated to states based on (a) the state’s population, (b) the state’s lack of availability and adoption of broadband in comparison with other states, and (c) the state’s comparative number of people who are in “covered” populations. Adoption Funding: \$240M for 2022 + \$1.2B from 2023-26 = \$1.4B
More Information	Each state will create its own plan, which can be administered by the state or a political subdivision of the state; a not-for-profit corporation , institution, association or coalition but not a school; a community anchor institution other than a school; a local educational agency; an entity located in the state that carries out workforce development programs; an agency of the state that is responsible for supervising adult education and literacy activities; a public or multi-family housing authority in the state or a partnership between any of these entities.
Keys to a Competitive Plan	<p>The plans must identify barriers to digital equity faced by covered populations in the state. For each covered population, it must include measurable objectives for documenting and promoting the availability and affordability of broadband connectivity and devices, the inclusivity of public resources and services, digital literacy, and awareness of and use of cybersecurity and privacy measures.</p> <p>The plans also must include an assessment of how the objectives will impact economic and workforce developments goals, educational and health outcomes, civic and social engagement, and delivery of other essential services. Additionally, the plans must include a description of how the state plans to collaborate with key stakeholders.</p>

Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program

Agency	NTIA (Dept of Commerce)
Amount	\$1.25B over five years
Funding Type/ Recipient	Political subdivisions, agencies or “instrumentality” of a state such as an agency responsible for administering or supervising adult education and literacy; native American tribes; non-for-profit entities other than schools ; community anchor institutions; local educational agencies’ entities that carry out workforce development programs; and partnerships between any of these entities and an entity that Commerce determines to be in the public interest but is not a school.
Program Description	Purpose: support efforts to achieve digital equity, promote digital inclusion activities and spur greater broadband adoption among covered populations.
Funding Details	Matching: At least 10%
More Information	<p>Eligible Projects: Grants can be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement digital inclusion activities to benefit covered populations • Facilitate broadband adoption by covered populations to provide educational and employment opportunities • Implement training programs for covered populations • Make broadband equipment and software available at little or no cost • Construct or upgrade public access computing centers for covered populations through community anchor institutions • Undertake other projects that Commerce finds to be consistent with the program’s purpose
Keys to a Competitive Proposal	Evaluation Criteria: NTIA will award funding based on whether applicants will increase internet access and adoption among covered populations, the geographic diversity of the application in comparison with other eligible applications and the extent to which an application may duplicate or conflict with another program.

Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

Agency	FCC
Amount	\$14B
Funding Type/ Recipient	Broadband Providers
Program Description	Affordable Connectivity Program (“ACP”) expands and makes permanent the temporary Emergency Broadband Benefit (“EBB”) program created in response to COVID-19.
Funding Details	Under the ACP, participating broadband providers will receive up to \$30/month to provide discounted broadband service to low-income households (households on tribal lands and in “high-cost areas” are eligible for up to \$75/month). The EBB provided \$50/month, but with more stringent end-user qualifications. Broadband providers can also receive up to \$100 per household for the purchase of a connected device from the provider, such as a laptop, tablet or desktop computer. Smartphones do not qualify.
More Information	<p>A household is eligible for the Affordable Connectivity Program if a member of the household meets at least one of the criteria below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has an income that is at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines; Participates in certain assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, SSI, WIC, or Lifeline; Participates in Tribal specific programs, such as Bureau of Indian Affairs General Assistance, Tribal TANF, or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations; Is approved to receive benefits under the free and reduced-price school lunch program or the school breakfast program, including through the USDA Community Eligibility Provision in the 2019-2020, 2020-2021, or 2021-2022 school year; Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year; or Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income program.

Additional Federal Broadband Funding Opportunities

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

American Rescue Plan Act

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund

Institute of Museum and Library Sciences

Economic Adjustment Assistance

Emergency Connectivity Fund

Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund

Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund

Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund

Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund

Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (CCPF)

Agency	Dept of Treasury
Amount	\$9.8B for States (\$540M to California); \$100M for Tribal Entities
Funding Type/ Recipient	States & Tribes/Tribal Entities
Program Description	Broadband infrastructure and discounts for "critical capital projects directly enabling work, education, and health monitoring.
Funding Details	<p>States: Deadline to Request Funding (12/27/2021); Deadlines to submit Grant Plan (9/24/2022)</p> <p>Tribal: Deadline to Request Funding (6/1/22)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funds available until expended. Eligible applicants will be required to provide a plan describing how they intend to use allocated funds under the Capital Projects Fund consistent with the American Rescue Plan and guidance to be issued by Treasury.
More Information	<p>These funds can be used for broadband projects, devices, and hotspots. The Capital Projects Fund allows for investment in high-quality broadband as well as other connectivity infrastructure, devices, and equipment. Examples include:</p> <p>Broadband Infrastructure Projects: the construction and deployment of broadband infrastructure designed to deliver service that reliably meets or exceeds symmetrical speeds of 100Mbps so that communities have future-proof infrastructure to serve their long-term needs.</p> <p>Digital Connectivity Technology Projects: the purchase or installation of devices and equipment, such as laptops, tablets, desktop personal computers, and public Wi-Fi equipment, to facilitate broadband internet access for communities where affordability is a barrier to broadband adoption and use.</p> <p>Multi-Purpose Community Facility Projects: the construction or improvement of buildings designed to jointly and directly enable work, education, and health monitoring located in communities with critical need for the project.</p>

Website: <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/capital-projects-fund>

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

Agency	Dept of Treasury
Amount	\$350B
Funding Type/ Recipient	Metropolitan Cities, Counties, and States; Tribal Governments
Program Description	Broadband infrastructure funding can be used to make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure. Using these funds, recipients generally should build broadband infrastructure with modern technologies in mind, specifically those projects that deliver services offering reliable 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload speeds. Final Rules Released Jan 6, 2022. Effective April 1, 2022, the rules include three examples of how the need might be defined, including “lack of access to a connection that reliably meets or exceeds symmetrical 100 Mbps download and upload speeds, lack of affordable access to broadband service, or lack of reliable broadband service.” The wording suggests that a state could allow funding to be used to overbuild existing broadband service if the existing service is deemed unaffordable or unreliable.
Funding Details	Application window is open. Application Portal: https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/coronavirus/assistance-for-state-local-and-tribal-governments/state-and-local-fiscal-recovery-fund/request-funding
More Information	If the jurisdiction is an eligible state, territorial, metropolitan city, county, or Tribal government, it can receive funding directly from Treasury. The Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds also will deliver nearly \$20 billion to tens of thousands of non-entitlement units of local government, which are typically local governments serving a population under 50,000 residents. Final Rules Released Jan 6, 2022 Effective April 1, 2022 Final ARPA Broadband Funding Rules 1) Providers receiving funding must participate in either the FCC Affordable Connectivity Program or “otherwise provide access to a broad-based affordability program to low-income consumers in the proposed service area . . . that provides benefits commensurate with those provided under the ACP.” 2) The new rules retain a guideline from the interim rules that calls for state and local governments to prioritize support for broadband networks “owned, operated by or affiliated with local governments, nonprofits, and cooperatives, given that these networks have less pressure to generate profits and a commitment to serve entire communities.” 3) Funding can be used for middle-mile connectivity, but Treasury encourages state and local governments to focus on projects that will achieve last-mile connections, either by directly funding last-mile connections or by ensuring that middle-mile projects have “commitments in place to support new and/or improved last-mile service.”

Questions?