ConnectLA
Louisiana Office of Broadband
Development & Connectivity

Supplemental Notice to Prospective Participants in Louisiana's Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Subgrant Process (GUMBO 2.0)

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Version: 8.0

Overview

This Supplemental Notice informs interested applicants of important updates aligned with the *BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice* (Policy Notice)*,* published by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) on June 6, 2025. The Policy Notice sets new requirements for Eligible Entities (states and territories) implementing BEAD programs, including the obligation to conduct at least one additional subgrantee selection round for every BEAD-eligible location (the "Benefit of the Bargain" or "BotB" offer).

Important: This Supplemental Notice **supersedes all prior guidance** related to Louisiana's BEAD application process for deployment projects. To the extent prior guidance conflicts with this supplemental notice, this supplemental notice controls.

Prior Subaward Selections Rescinded

All preliminary and provisional subaward selections have been rescinded.

Elimination of Regulatory Requirements

As required by the Policy Notice, the following regulatory requirements are eliminated (only those affecting Louisiana's BEAD process are listed):
- Labor, Employment, and Workforce Development Requirements
- Climate Change Requirements
- Open Access/Net Neutrality
- Non-Traditional Broadband Providers

- Middle Class Affordability Plan
- Low-Cost Service Option
  - *Note: Consistent with the IIJA, subgrantees must propose a low-cost service option (LCSO) as part of their applications that meets offers speeds of at least 100/20 Mbps and latency performance of no more than 100 milliseconds. Applicants that already offer a low-cost plan that meets these service requirements may satisfy the LCSO requirement by proposing to offer their existing low-cost plan to eligible subscribers.*
  - *The term "Eligible Subscriber" means any household seeking to subscribe to broadband internet access service that is eligible for the FCC's Lifeline Program. Subgrantees will be responsible for verifying LCSO eligibility and may ask potential subscribers to provide the same documentation necessary to confirm eligibility as is required under the Lifeline program.*

Technology Neutrality

Per the Policy Notice, ConnectLA will apply a technology-neutral approach in selecting subgrantees. All broadband technologies meeting the performance standards in IIJA and the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) are eligible. Further, all applicants may seek to have their applications treated as a **Priority Broadband Project**, regardless of the technology used. See the section below for detailed criteria.

Optimizing BEAD Locations

As required by the Policy Notice, ConnectLA will:
- Modify BEAD-eligible location lists to include locations no longer served due to a default or change in service area on a Federal enforceable commitment where the Federal entity has notified NTIA and the Eligible Entity of the default. NTIA on June 13, 2025, confirmed that Louisiana **has no such locations.**
- Investigate and account for locations that do not require BEAD funding using the reason code process as detailed in the Final Proposal Guidance.
- Exclude from BEAD awards locations served by unlicensed fixed wireless (ULFW) providers where (a) the National Broadband Map shows those locations as having available broadband service at 100/20 with latency less than or equal to 100ms by a provider with unlicensed fixed wireless service (tech code 70), (b) that provider submitted a notice to ConnectLA of its intent to submit evidence that the locations are served, and (c) within seven days of submitting such notice, the provider "submit[ed] documentation supporting the claim that the existing ULFW services meet the same technical and service standards required for a ULFW application for a BEAD subgrant (see Appendix A of this Notice) and the provider is reasonably capable of delivering the service for at least four years after the date of Final Proposal submission." See Supplemental Notice V6.0 (June 11, 2025) on ConnectLA's website here.
- Review and, if necessary, revise its list of eligible Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs) to ensure the designations conform with the statutory definition of a CAI as established by IIJA.

Benefit of the Bargain Offer

ConnectLA is accepting applications as part of an additional Benefit of the Bargain Offer (BOBO) process and encourages interested parties to apply.

Pre-qualification

- The BOBO pre-qualification process will reopen to all interested applicants. Per the Policy Notice, *"existing qualified applicants do not need to resubmit pre-qualification documentation."* Previously disqualified applicants may revise and resubmit their documentation for reconsideration. For further details related to the reopening of pre-qualification, see Supplemental Notice V7.0 (June 24, 2025) on ConnectLA's website here.

BOBO Application Access
- **Opening:** Tuesday, July 1, 2025, at 8:00 AM (CST)
- **Closing:** Wednesday, July 9, 2025, at 8:00 AM (CST)
- **Portal Access:** https://login.la.grantaward.io/

How To Apply
- Your authorized organization representative (AOR) will receive a link to access the application platform from connectLAsupport@costquest.com.
- If your AOR does not receive the link to access the application, please check the spam or junk folder. If you are still unable to locate the email, please reach out to support@connectla.zendesk.com.
- **Please note:** Once submitted, applications cannot be withdrawn, so please ensure everything in your final application is correct and accurate. **Additionally, please be aware that applications must be approved and submitted by the AOR. If the AOR is the individual creating and submitting the application, the AOR must also approve the application to fully submit it.**

Application Platform Information
- Other users will not be able to see information entered into the application bidding platform. The information in your application is only available to the admin and users that providers assign from their organizations.
- Applications may be downloaded from the system as a CSV file. The summary report cannot be saved as a PDF, but in the next set of options in that section of the Application Bidding Platform, you can export the project area details and location IDs within those areas as a csv. We want to ensure that you have that list to ultimately know your commitment. However, the location ID export does not include geocoordinates, only location IDs.
- Any user can create/view applications. Any user can edit an "in-progress" application, but only the admin can approve and submit applications. When an application round ends, access to the application is turned off to all users. The banner at the top of the page indicates the date and time the round closes, and

applications are no longer accessible after that time. We recommend downloading your applications to ensure you have everything that you've submitted for your records.

- Each Application Bidding Platform account is limited to five users, even if an application involves a consortium of companies. Inactive users do not count toward the limit, but you can still view people as creators of an application even if they've been deactivated. You may send invites to consultants, but you are still limited to only four users and one AOR per applicant.
- *Technical Support* – For application issues, contact our support desk at support@connectla.zendesk.com.

Project Areas

- ConnectLA will publish a new set of project areas consisting primarily of groupings of ConnectLA's previously established sub-project areas (SPAs). These project areas were identified based on a variety of factors, including prior competitive interest, estimated cost to serve, and geographical considerations.
- As required by the Policy Notice, applicants may propose to exclude select broadband serviceable locations (BSLs) that the applicant determines are excessively high-cost locations from the project area (or would otherwise make the project economically unviable for the technology being used). ConnectLA will solicit bids from other potential applicants for any such excluded BSLs.
- Applicants may bid on exactly one project area per application. Project areas may not be combined. Applicants may submit a maximum of two bid(s) per project area. Due to utilization of project areas, all participating applicants must submit new bids.

Priority Broadband Projects

IIJA requires Eligible Entities to prioritize funding for "priority broadband projects." The term "Priority Broadband Project" means:
- "a project that provides broadband service at speeds of no less than 100 megabits per second for downloads and 20 megabits per second for uploads, has a latency less than or equal to 100 milliseconds, and can easily scale speeds over time to meet the evolving connectivity needs of households and businesses and support the deployment of 5G, successor wireless technologies, and other advanced services."

Applicants may request that their applications be treated as a Priority Broadband Project—regardless of the technology used—by selecting 'Yes' in the portal when prompted. The applicant's project, however, must still meet the required speed and latency standards set forth in the definition above (as per the statute and the NOFO) and demonstrate that it meets the additional statutory criteria, including that the project can easily scale speeds over time to support evolving connectivity needs and the deployment of 5G and successor wireless technologies.

Applicants must provide supporting documentation sufficient for ConnectLA to assess the network application and determine that the proposed network architecture for each specific project area meets this standard. Applicants shall provide, at a minimum, supporting documentation that includes:

- A statement of whether the project as designed can:
    - Be easily scaled to support symmetrical upload and download speeds of 1 Gbps, 5 Gbps, and/or 10Gbps;
    - Whether such scaling can be easily achieved by (a) the end of the project's period of performance, or (b) 10 years after the year in which the subgrant for a project has been closed out pursuant to 2 CFR 200.344;
    - An explanation of the project's capacity to deliver those speeds to all BSLs in the project area, working from the assumption that a network capable of providing 100 Mbps downstream capacity requires at least 5 Mbps of simultaneous downstream capacity for each BSL in the project area;
    - The cost of any software or hardware upgrades required to obtain those speeds and whether those costs are accounted for in the applicant's pro formas;
    - The amount of time required to conduct such upgrades;
    - An explanation of whether the project can or will be able to provide dedicated backhaul for 5G services, and on what time; and
    - A demonstration and narrative that this scaling is easy to achieve. This should be in the form of time to deploy with the relative expense compared to the initial deployment.

- Evidence to support the ability of the network to easily support emerging real-time applications (<=20ms) and high-precision applications (<=50ms), to include AR, AI and IOT applications.

- For projects that rely on wireless spectrum (i.e., fixed wireless and low earth orbit satellite)
    - Identification of the specific spectrum bands to be utilized in the project, including the minimum and maximum radio frequency bandwidth, and the spectral efficiency of the network.
    - Details of the network capabilities including maximum capacity of each base station, simultaneous capacity to all BSLs, reserved base station capacity and capacity expansion strategies, and adherence to equipment manufacturer best practices.

o   Maximum distance to served locations for each tower or radio location, and an explanation of the propagation analysis utilized to determine the applicant's ability to serve the BSLs included in the project.

o   Details on the backhaul that will be utilized from each tower, radio location, or gateway.

Applicants must provide supporting documentation sufficient for ConnectLA to determine that the proposed network architecture for each specific project area meets this standard. To assist with this determination, all applicants seeking Priority status must provide a Professional Engineer certification attesting to the accuracy of the scalability claims made in the application.

Subgrantee Selection Methodology

The following evaluation criteria supersede all prior ConnectLA BEAD criteria and will be utilized to analyze competing Priority Broadband Project applications and, if no Priority Broadband Project was submitted for consideration for that respective project area or location or if the cost of the project is excessive, competing non-Priority Broadband Project applications.

Per the Policy Notice, ConnectLA hereby adopts the following subgrantee selection criteria:

Primary Criteria:

In deciding among competing applications covering the same general project area, ConnectLA will choose the option with the lowest cost based on minimal BEAD Program outlay.

ConnectLA will select the combination of project proposals with the lowest overall cost to the Program. When comparing competing proposals, ConnectLA shall assess total BEAD funding required to complete the project and the cost to the Program per location.

Secondary Criteria:

If an application to serve the same general project area proposes a project cost within 15% of the lowest-cost proposal received for that same general project area on a per BSL basis, ConnectLA will evaluate such competing applications based on the following three criteria:

1. *Preliminary Subgrantees*
   - For locations where ConnectLA has already identified preliminarily selected subgrantees, ConnectLA will select those applications in the BOBO process.
   - If no applicant for locations was previously preliminarily selected, ConnectLA will evaluate the second criterion.

2. *Speed of Network and Other Technical Capabilities*
   - ConnectLA will evaluate the speed, latency, and other technical capabilities of the technologies proposed by prospective subgrantees and select the application with the highest technical capabilities.
   - If all applications have equal capabilities, ConnectLA will evaluate the third criterion.

3. *Speed of Deployment*
   - ConnectLA will evaluate the prospective subgrantee's binding commitment to provide service by a date certain that is earlier than four years after the date on which the subgrantee will receive the subgrant from ConnectLA subject to contractual penalties and will select the application with the fastest speed to deployment.
   - If all applications have equal deployment timelines, ConnectLA will select the lowest-cost proposal received for that same general project area.

ConnectLA will prioritize Priority Broadband Projects over non-Priority Broadband Projects. If ConnectLA determines that selecting any Priority Broadband Project would incur excessive costs, it shall select a lower cost non-Priority Broadband Project. Additionally, if ConnectLA determines that no proposal meets the definition of a Priority Broadband Project, then it may select a non-priority broadband project that meets the speed and latency requirements of the statute and NOFO.

Key Reminders
   - Updated locations for the BOBO process are available on ConnectLA's website here.
   - **No curing opportunities** will be provided during the application process, except at the sole discretion of the ConnectLA office.

If you have any questions or need further clarification regarding the BOBO Round application process, please do not hesitate to contact our office at connect@la.gov.

Version history

Supplemental Notice Version	Release date
1.0	March 14, 2024
2.0	July 29, 2024
3.0	August 9, 2024
4.0	October 4, 2024
5.0	November 18, 2024
6.0	June 11, 2025
7.0	June 24, 2025
8.0	June 27, 2025