Broadband Bulletin June 2021
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Bringing Connectivity to Your Community

BROADBAND BULLETIN

June 2021

The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) is working New Mexico with a coordinated to make high speed broadband accessible to all New Mexicans. OBAE's mission is to expand and improve high speed internet service with personal user leadership that drives local economic growth, improves education and healthcare outcomes, and ensures that the federal dollars to usher results from the state's rich heritage and promote quality of life for all.

High-Speed Happenings

OBAE Welcomes New Director

Jeff Liser, OBAE Director

The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) has a new leader.

Jeff Liser, Gov. Lujan Grisham announced the appointment of Jeff Liser as Director of OBAE.

Liser brings extensive federal policy and infrastructure expertise to his new leadership role at the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE).

As the head of OBAE, Liser oversees hundreds of millions of dollars in critical broadband expansion, deployment and services. He supervises state broadband initiatives, including the Broadband Infrastructure Development Grant Program, the Broadband Capacity Collaborative (BCC), the Statewide Education Network, OBAE's Student Connections Program and the Broadband Ambassadors Program.

"I've witnessed the perfect combination of federal policy knowledge, broadband program promotion, and familiarity with New Mexico communities that can only be acquired from a native New Mexican," said Gov. Lujan Grisham. "Jeff's work ethic and his ability to get things done in this state ensure New Mexicans have access to reliable, high-speed internet, from our rural communities to our urban centers."

"I am honored and humbled by the governor's confidence in me to manage this important agency," said Liser. "Broadband is critical to our state's future, and it's impacted our economy, our education system, our healthcare system, our quality of life. Expanding high-speed broadband will mean true access to New Mexico's rich heritage, promote economic development, and improve our quality of life."

Liser brings more than 12 years of federal experience in support of New Mexicans. Prior to this appointment, he served as senior policy advisor to U.S. Senator Tom Udall. Liser's portfolio included broadband, telecommunications, and cybersecurity. He also worked on Broadband and rural issues directly on legislation that created the federal BEAD program. Liser also helped secure nearly $70 million in federal COVID-relief broadband and underserved household across the state.

Liser also coordinated the senator's bipartisan work to create the Universal Service Fund Reform Act, which modernized and supplemented program to fund broadband in rural and underserved communities.

In addition, the Governor appointed Aquilino "Gabe" Trujillo to serve as Deputy Director. Trujillo has been with OBAE since its inception, and has been instrumental in building and maintaining partnerships with OBAE's 2,000 plus members to develop the broadband ecosystem in New Mexico, including the Broadband Capacity Collaborative Working Group.

Federal Government Receives New Mexico's Largest Broadband Infrastructure Funding Program

OBAE Connecting Providers and Others Since New National Rules That Seek to Ensure Last Mile Deployment are Considered

The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) has been notifying broadband providers and other entities about the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program, a fiscal year historic $45B, most ever, program with rules unlike any previous federal broadband program.

The federal changes affect all 50 states and 6 territories, and the returns are designed to ensure all broadband technologies are considered in grant applications. States will submit their initial proposals to NTIA by December 27, 2021, and NTIA will approve or deny proposals. The NTIA has committed to review and approve all first broadband infrastructure proposals within 60 days.

The new guidance requires all states and territories to conduct at least one broadband grant application round for all eligible locations, regardless of where the state sees in the broadband ecosystem process. NTIA is calling this round "Last Mile Deployment" or "Not Spots" round.

"This change represents a significant shift in the structure and priorities of the BEAD program, and we want to make sure New Mexico's Last Mile providers are ready," said Jeff Liser, Director of the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion. "At the end of the day, we want to make sure New Mexicans have access to high-speed internet."

The restructuring means the state must submit any preliminary and provisional selections for broadband infrastructure grants by December 27, 2021.

All provisional selections submitted to NTIA are reviewed and considered for the final guidance, but the state's provisional approved selection criteria, Local governments, Tribal governments, and other entities, including broadband providers, will have the ability and weighing to apply for BEAD funding, based on the state's selection criteria.

The criteria also requires all eligible entities to revise their maps of BEAD eligible locations, commonly known as the "Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric" to include additional Broadband serviceable location or unserved and underserved locations.

The results mean that in New Mexico, approximately 30,000 unserved and underserved locations will be added to the BEAD map.

Since BEAD began in 2021 as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the program sought a New Deal approach. The goal was to make the federal a "technology neutral program" allowing states to work with the market of letting what technology will be deployed.

The NTIA Seven Policy Notes on the BEAD program includes the following, returns:

- Ensure that the BEAD program is open to all broadband technologies and business models capable of meeting ambitious requirements that transcend from speed to reliability, security, and latency requirements to ensure future-proofed networks;
- Ensure that the BEAD program is open to all eligible entities, including those with an additional "Benefit of the Bargain Round" for broadband solutions;
- Ensure that the BEAD program is open to all broadband technologies capable of scale to gigabit speeds. Ultimately, gigabit-capable broadband networks are the future-proof technology.

The national BEAD program intentions to fund 40 million hunger but while priorities regarding broadband expansion and development.

The returns come as New Mexico has begun to expect $670 million in grants through the state's broadband infrastructure funding program to build out last mile broadband infrastructure.

If you want more information or have questions, please email Andrew Wilder, OBAE's BEAD Program Manager, at andrew.wilder@state.nm.us.

For more information on BEAD, CLICK HERE.

OBAE's BEAD Coordinator, Andrew Wilder, recently hosted a webinar covering the BEAD program. The webinar provided an overview of BEAD and the opportunity for New Mexico. The webinar provided an overview of notable changes, a working timeline for New Mexico's non-deployment BEAD implementation, high-level details of the Benefit of the Bargain Round, and more.

CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE LAST 30 MINUTES OF THE WEBINAR

Members of New Mexico's Federal Congressional Among Leaders to Call on Administration to Fully Implement BEAD

The following is a press release issued by NM U.S. Sen. Ben Ray Lujan as members of Congress and the Senate call on the U.S. Commerce Secretary to implement BEAD program in a way that benefits New Mexico.

Lujan, Heinrich, Luger Fernandez, Stansbury, Stansbury, Gallego, Vasquez, Sen. Tom Udall Urge Secretary Raimondo to Implement Broadband Program Equitably

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senators Ben Ray Lujan (D-N.M.), Ranking Member of the Senate Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation and the Internet, Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.), and Representatives Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-N.M.) and all their colleagues called on Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo to fully implement the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program in a way that ensures all communities in high-speed, affordable Internet. The letter comes as the Commerce Department is preparing to release the final guidance for the nation's $45 billion BEAD program.

"We write to express our concerns regarding the implementation of the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program," the lawmakers wrote. "The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program was established by Congress in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to provide a historic investment in broadband infrastructure. It is critical that the nearly 42 million Americans that continue to lack high-speed Internet access. We urge you to ensure that the Department's implementation of the program is in the spirit of the bipartisanship which is fully most deep statutory objectives."

"This bipartisan division of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law begins with the unprecedented investment in broadband infrastructure, which will be the most significant in our lifetime and in modern life in the United States. **The Lawmakers continued.** "The fundamental reality that the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the critical importance of high-speed, affordable access of broadband should be broadly enjoyed by all."

The letter was also signed by U.S. Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), Gary Peters (D-Mich.), Jack Reed (D-R.I.), Raphael Warnock (D-Ga.), Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), and Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.), and Representatives Ann Kuster (D-N.H.), Ted Deutch (D-Fla.), Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.), Bonnie Coleman (D-N.J.), Donald Payne, Jr. (D-N.J.), Ted Lieu (D-Calif.), Jerry McNerney (D-Calif.), Bobby Rush (D-Ill.), Yvette D. Clarke (D-N.Y.), Doris Matsui (D-Calif.), Anna G. Eshoo (D-Calif.), Doris O. Matsui (D-Calif.), Frank Pallone (D-N.J.), Gerald E. Connolly (D-Va.), Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.), Mark Takano (D-Calif.), Mondaire Jones (D-N.Y.), Ted Deutch (D-Fla.), Ted Lieu (D-Calif.), Tom Malinowski (D-N.J.), Yvette D. Clarke (D-N.Y.), Yvette Herrell (R-N.M.), Tom Reed (R-N.Y.), Tom Rice (R-S.C.), Nicole Malliotakis (R-N.Y.), Ralph Norman (R-S.C.), Michael Guest (R-Miss.), Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-Iowa), Ann Wagner (R-Mo.), Mike Bost (R-Ill.), Mike Kelly (R-Pa.), Glenn Grothman (R-Wis.), Chris Pappas (D-N.H.), Tom Malinowski (D-N.J.), Tom Reed (R-N.Y.), Nicole Malliotakis (R-N.Y.), Ralph Norman (R-S.C.).

The full text of the letter is available here.

More than $3 Million Still Available in OBAE Grants

The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) wants to let all providers that have a $0.2 million in grants still available through the state's Grant Writing, Engineering and Technical Assistance.

OBAE's Grant Writing, Engineering and Technical Assistance Program is a competitive grant program that provides up to $200,000 per applicant to assist in the development of broadband infrastructure projects.

Grants are specifically designed to support planning, engineering and grant writing to help entities construct and deploy broadband in their areas.

Jeff Liser, Director of the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion

OBAE has now issued over $1.5M in grants, leaving $3.5 million. The statewide include 10 local government and tribal entities across the state.

This funding will lead to accelerated projects in remote parts of the state where internet connectivity is nonexistent. Grants will help fund the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Coalition. The Coalition is aggressively seeks to bridge the digital divide in New Mexico by quickly as possible.

Eligible entities include Tribal governments, local governments, rural telephone cooperatives and non-profit cooperatives is current applications. Matching funds are not required. These grants are not consultation, but assistance grants, aimed at kick-starting broadband infrastructure projects.

To apply for a BEAD grant, see here: https://obae.connectnewmx.com/bead

Entities that have already received awards are entitled to receive a second

The maximum amount allowed for each award under the state program is $100,000.

Internal service providers are not eligible.

CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE LAST 30 MINUTES OF THE WEBINAR

OBAE Defines Broadband News at State Tribal Leaders Summit

Jeff Liser, Director of the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion

Tribal Leaders from Pueblos and Nations met with Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, cabinet secretaries, and state officials at the annual State Tribal Leaders Summit in Santa Fe on June 14th.

Department of Information Technology Secretary and Chief Information Officer Jackie Ortiz, Department of Public Safety Secretary Pete Kassetas, Department of Health Secretary Kathyn Kunkel and Office of Broadband Access and Expansion Director Jeff Liser, Tribal Leaders from Pueblos and Nations and the NM Indian Affairs Department, discussing capital outlay and Tribal infrastructure funding.

"These gatherings are critical in addressing the mutual concerns between Tribal and state leadership," said Gov. Lujan Grisham. "I am honored to collaborate with Tribal and Pueblo leaders to ensure the best outcomes for New Mexico Broadband and Water Resource access to water."

Jackie Ortiz, Secretary and Chief Information Officer, Department of Information Technology

Jeff Liser, Director of the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion

Leaders also discussed economic issues and developments at the Indian Affairs Department, including capital outlay and Tribal infrastructure funding.

OBAE and DoIT Help Constituents at Governor's Cabinet in Your Community

The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) participated in the Lujan Grisham Administration's Cabinet in Your Community Expo and Town Hall in Hobbs last month. The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion and Del Carlisle set up operations to discuss issues with constituents as part of an effort to bring state agencies to the people and to provide a place with