



National Telecommunications and Information Administration approves OBAE's broadband plan that would release \$675 million for connectivity



The NM Office of Broadband Access and Expansion announced today that the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has approved Volume 2 of the state's Initial Proposal under the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. That program provides federal dollars to states and territories to fund broadband planning, infrastructure deployment and adoption projects to unserved and underserved locations.

The NTIA's approval for the state clears the way for the state's Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) to begin the application process to select grant awardees. Local governments, tribal communities, non-profits, internet service providers, cooperatives and other entities will be eligible for state grants to deploy infrastructure projects across the state.

The approval of the Initial Proposal Volume 2 means the state will have one year to submit a Final Proposal that will include the subgrantee selections and details on how the state will provide funding for service to unserved and underserved locations, the latter meaning any location without access to broadband speeds of at least 100Mbps download and 20 Mbps uploads.

Once the NTIA green lights the Final Proposal, permitting and broadband construction can begin.

“This approval is a big move forward in our efforts to bring connectivity to all New Mexicans. We are delighted and grateful that the NTIA has accepted our Initial Proposals,” said Drew Lovelace, Acting Director of OBAE. “High-speed internet is no longer a luxury but a necessity in these challenging times. Providing broadband to rural and hard-to-reach areas means New Mexicans will have access to telehealth, distance learning, job opportunities, government services and economic growth.”

“As we reach this milestone, we are keenly aware that many New Mexicans needed broadband yesterday,” said Andrew Wilder, OBAE’s BEAD Coordinator. “The approval of our Initial Proposals frees us to begin a critical phase of the BEAD Program, when the entities that will finally bring service to these families will be selected.”