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State opens application process for \$675 million in broadband grants

SANTA FE—Today, the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) announced that local governments, tribal communities, nonprofits, internet service providers, cooperatives and other entities may begin the process of applying for the state’s largest funding program for broadband infrastructure.

The state will be awarding \$675 million in grants through the federal government’s Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program.

Entities that want to build infrastructure for unserved communities may now submit prequalification applications to OBAE. The applications will help the state determine whether an entity has the technical capability and financial stability to deploy broadband and meet federal and state requirements.

“This is an exciting next step to help fulfill our mission to close the digital divide in New Mexico,” said **Andrew Wilder, OBAE’s BEAD Coordinator**. “This is a once-in-a-generation investment in broadband for the state, and we want to evaluate all applicants carefully to ensure the funding is used responsibly and distributed fairly. New Mexicans deserve nothing less.”

The state will decide whether an entity can move forward with a formal application by using the following criteria:

- Financial capabilities
- Managerial capabilities
- Technical capabilities
- Legal and regulatory compliance
- Operational capabilities
- Ownership
- Stewardship of other public funding

The prequalification process ends November 1.

OBAE expects dozens of prequalification applications to be submitted. Interested applicants will also learn about the state and federal requirements in the BEAD program. Interested entities can find the prequalification application and submission portal on [OBAE's website](#).

Once these are evaluated, entities will formally apply for their suggested broadband projects based on broadband-dry areas. Both the state and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration must approve the final applications.

Federal and state data show that 16% of the state's 873,797 serviceable locations are unserved or underserved.

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The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion is dedicated to serving New Mexico with a commitment to make high-speed broadband accessible to all New Mexicans. OBAE's mission is to expand and improve high-speed internet service with passionate leadership that drives bold, equitable, affordable and inclusive broadband solutions. OBAE seeks results that honor the state's rich heritage and elevate quality of life for all.