

Federal government approves state broadband deployment plan *NM to offer \$675 million in grants for expanding high-speed internet*

SANTA FE—The Office of Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham today announced that it has received approval from the federal government to begin accepting applications for grants to expand high-speed internet access to unserved and underserved communities throughout New Mexico.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) approval clears the way for the state's Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) to begin the grant application process under the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program. Local governments, Tribal communities, non-profits, internet service providers, cooperatives and other entities will be eligible for grants to deploy infrastructure projects across the state.

The grants would be financed with \$675 million being made available to New Mexico through the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

“This is a tremendous step towards achieving broadband connectivity across New Mexico, particularly in rural and Tribal communities,” said **Gov. Lujan Grisham**. “Thanks to the Biden Administration, this \$675 million investment will help expand high-speed internet to families and businesses throughout our state.”

The state will have one year to submit a final proposal that will include the grant selections and details on how the state will provide funding for service to unserved and underserved locations. An underserved location is one that does not have access to broadband speeds of at least 100Mbps download and 20 Mbps uploads.

Once the NTIA greenlights the final proposal, broadband construction can begin.

“High-speed internet is no longer a luxury but a necessity,” said **Drew Lovelace, Acting Director of OBAE**. “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 selecting the entities that will finally bring service to these families.”

OBAE will announce at a later date when applications will be open.

Federal and state data show that 16% of the state's 873,797 serviceable locations are unserved or underserved. With its other broadband programs, such as the Connect NM Pilot Program, OBAE is beginning to close the digital divide in the state. Those programs are already helping to deploy high-speed internet to more than 45,000 locations across the state.

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