

BEAD Community Engagement

Broadband infrastructure deployment and adoption are key tools for economic growth, increased educational innovation, expanded access to health care, and increased personal connection.

The State of Utah wants to ensure every resident can access reliable and affordable broadband internet to enhance their quality of life. The [Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment \(BEAD\) program](#), established by the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act \(IIJA\)](#), allocated more than \$317.3 million to Utah to expand broadband infrastructure to the remaining unserved or underserved locations in the state. Unserved locations are defined as locations with either no internet access or access to internet speeds under 25/3 Mbps. Underserved locations are defined as locations with access to internet speeds under 100/20 Mbps. The BEAD funds, administered by the Utah Broadband Center (UBC), will be used strategically with other state, federal, educational, or nonprofit resources to close the remaining broadband access divide in Utah.

To ensure that BEAD-funded broadband infrastructure deployment projects are implemented successfully, it is crucial for local communities to get involved with these efforts. The support and cooperation of local leaders are essential to establish the successful implementation of these projects.

Local communities can facilitate the success of these projects to prepare for high-speed broadband deployment. Preparations include assessing existing infrastructure readiness, clarifying the local utility system, identifying relevant environmental impacts and partnerships, and streamlining permitting processes. Further explanations and resources to support these activities can be found [here](#).

Local communities can also support successful broadband project deployments by engaging frequently with broadband service providers in your area. Broadband service providers interested in applying for BEAD funding will be asked to show extensive community engagement and plans for community impact in their funding applications. This engagement includes activities such as participating in a public meeting, documenting local support through resolutions or other formal demonstrations of consent, and identifying a solution to a community broadband need that can be provided by the deployment project (for example, providing gigabit service to the local library or city offices). Please encourage these efforts from broadband service providers in your area by agreeing to meet with them on request.

The application for BEAD funding is designed to bolster local coordination. Utah Broadband Center (UBC) expects applicants to demonstrate meaningful engagement with communities in their selected Utah Project Funding Area (UPFA) to ensure that engagement remains dynamic, effective, and inclusive, aligning with the strategic objectives set forth in the [Initial Proposal](#) and ensuring that the planned network addresses local community needs.

To foster local coordination, applicants should participate in a public meeting where their broadband deployment project is discussed and upload documentation of attendance. To further support local coordination efforts, applicants are also required to submit a plan addressing community impact developed after consulting with local community organizations to identify specific needs. Additional details about these requirements can be found in the [Formal Application Guide](#) on page 32 items #5 and #6.

Finally, to ensure that BEAD funds are going to the locations that will benefit the most from broadband deployment, UBC is asking broadband service providers, local and regional governments, Tribal governments, state agencies, and nonprofits to help identify locations that do not need to be served by these projects. [UBC has published a list of locations](#) that are currently identified as BEAD-eligible. If you know of any of these locations that don't need to be served, either because they are already served with high-speed internet or because they are not a valid home or business (e.g. a barn, silo, haystack, etc.), [please submit those locations along with evidence](#) showing that they do not need to be served to UBC. This will help ensure that BEAD funds are only used to connect truly unserved or underserved locations.

The support of local leaders and communities is key to the success of this once-in-a-lifetime broadband infrastructure investment for Utah. With your help, we can ensure every resident of Utah has access to reliable and affordable broadband internet to enhance their quality of life.