Internet for All in Washington

House Technology, Economic Development, & Veterans Committee

Washington State Broadband Office

JORDAN ARNOLD

DIRECTOR, WASHINGTON STATE BROADBAND OFFICE

2/4/26

Washington State Department of Commerce

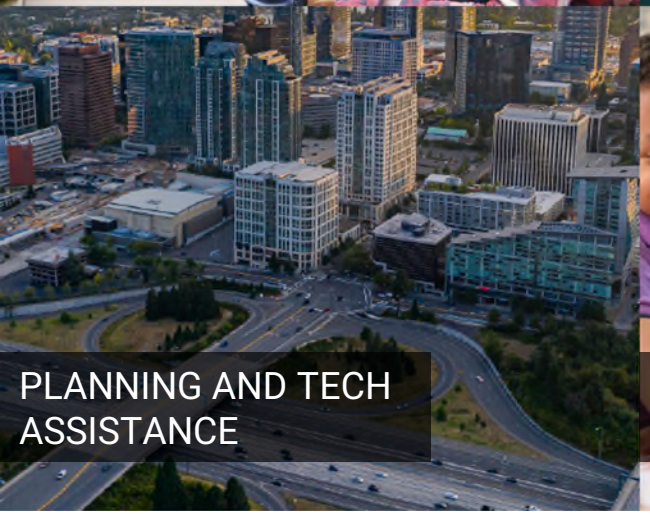
We strengthen communities

















Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD)

Process Update and Next Steps

Timeline of Important Dates

January – June 2025

Trump Administration reviews the BEAD program

June 6, 2025

Trump Administration overhauls BEAD, prioritizing low-cost technologies

July 3, 2025

WSBO opens Benefit of the Bargain Round – Read our announcement

September 4, 2025

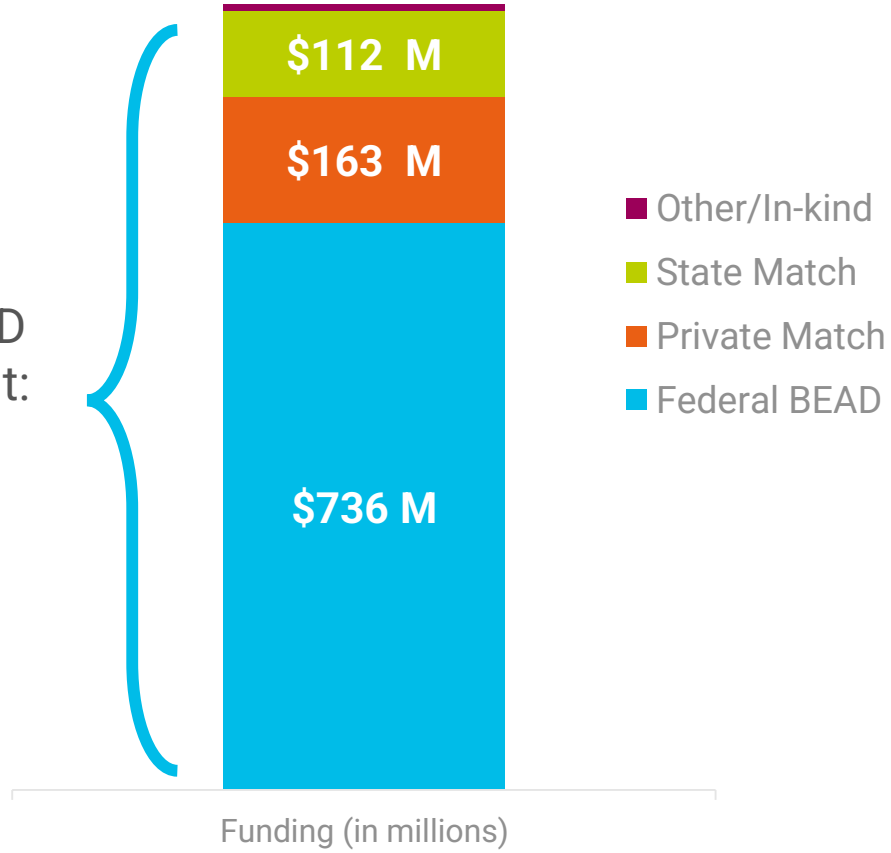
WSBO submits the Final Proposal to NTIA – Read our announcement

Expecting approval soon – but no formal date

- Since submission of our Final Proposal five months ago, we have been working towards gaining National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) approval
  - 25 formal requests for changes
- Common discussion with NTIA included:
  - Project area costs – Benefit of the Bargain requirements prioritized cost savings over fiber
  - Tribal sovereignty – WSBO prioritized tribal sovereignty in the final proposal and deferred to Tribe's prioritization process for their projects
- January 9, 2026: Most recent formal resubmission of Final Proposal

Preliminary BEAD results - Funding

Total BEAD investment: **$1.02B**



- BEAD is driving over $1 billion investment in Washington.
  - All applicants were required to provide >25% match
  - State match funding was available for public entities, PUDs, ports, cities, counties and Tribes ($112M).

Please note: Funding results are not final without NTIA approval.

Preliminary BEAD results - Technologies

Washington's BEAD Program will connect 166,000 homes and small business stuck on the wrong side of the digital divide.



Fiber
58,531 locations (35%)



Fixed Wireless
63,642 locations (38%)



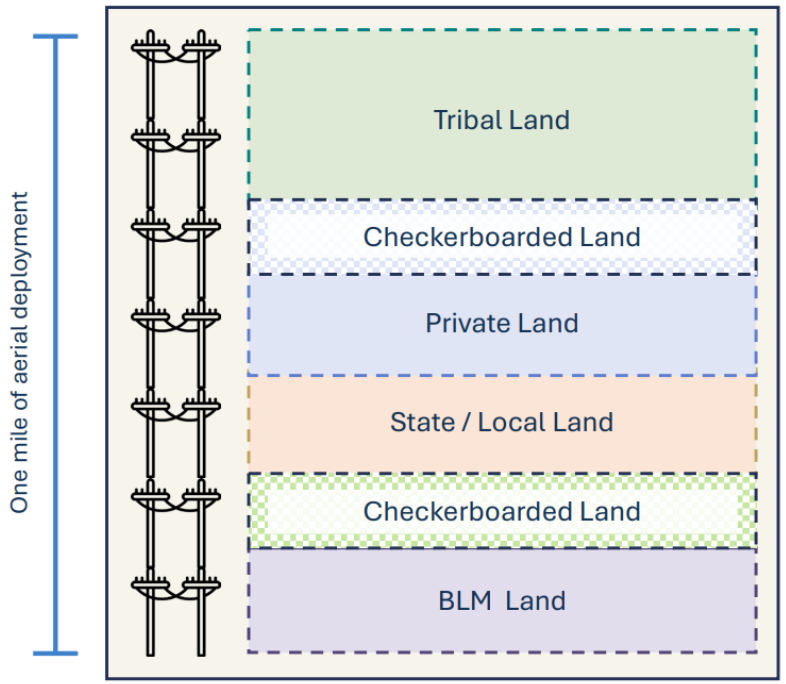
LEO Satellite
44,333 locations (27%)

What happens next

- After NTIA approval is secured, WSBO will:
  - Formally announce awards to provisional awardees
  - Execute subgrantee agreements with approved providers
  - Monitor permitting and environmental reviews
  - Begin construction oversight and monitoring
  - Ensure projects are completed on schedule and within budget
- Construction timelines vary by project, but all construction must be completed within four years.
- WSBO anticipates that some projects will break ground this year.

BEAD Permitting Process

What is broadband permitting?



A mile-long project can require many permits.

- Easements, Rights-of-Way (ROW), and Other Permits
  - Subgrantees need permission to access assets controlled by public or private entities
  - Examples of assets: State, Tribal, or federal-owned land, poles, conduit, federal highways
- Environmental and Historic Preservation (EHP) Reviews
  - All BEAD projects must complete National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review before starting construction, as well as other federal and state EHP requirements

How will WSBO accelerate permitting?

- **Goal**: Broadband permits issued or denied in 90 days
- Communicate regularly with our permitting partners
  - Examples: Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC), Public Utility Districts (PUDs) and utilities, and local governments
- Establish permitting roundtables
  - Working groups of relevant partners, including federal, state, local, and tribal authorities; utility pole owners; and BEAD subgrantees that meet regularly to resolve project-specific permitting issues
- Publicizing federal permitting resources and trainings
  - Example: NTIA/Bureau of Land Management Interagency Permitting Summit

How will WSBO accelerate EHP review?

- Acquire expertise to support our environmental and historic preservation review
  - WSBO's request for proposals for environmental support services closed Monday, February 2 (using BEAD funding)
- Work closely with the awarded firm to support subgrantees
  - The firm will offer guidance and technical assistance to subgrantees
- Use streamlined review options when available & as appropriate
  - NTIA has created multiple efficiencies to speed environmental review, including expanded categorical exclusions for NEPA and decision keys for Endangered Species Act reviews

Thank you!

Questions?

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