



VERMONT

VERMONT COMMUNITY BROADBAND BOARD

**Rural Broadband and Federal BEAD Funding
House Energy and Digital Infrastructure**

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[HTTPS://PUBLICSERVICE.VERMONT.GOV/VCBB](https://publicservice.vermont.gov/vcbb)

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD)

\$42.45 billion nationwide to expand high-speed internet access by funding planning, infrastructure, deployment, and adoption programs

\$229 million for VT (VT expected ~ \$125M!)

Competitive program

Cover BOTH On and Off Grid Address

100/20 Mbps required; Fiber first!

Funds must first cover All Unserved (including off-grid); then Underserved; then Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs)

Funds available late 2025

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD)

The plan

- ☐ 100 percent of locations will have access to reliable broadband
- ☐ 95 percent of eligible locations will have access to fiber
- ☐ There is adequate funding

Changes could result in 18 Months of Delay

Like all Federal Programs – lots of speculation



“Under my leadership, the Commerce Department has launched a rigorous review of the BEAD program. The Department is ripping out the Biden Administration’s pointless requirements. It is revamping the BEAD program to take a tech-neutral approach that is rigorously driven by outcomes, so states can provide internet access for the lowest cost.”

“Under the revamped BEAD program, all Americans will receive the benefit of the bargain that Congress intended. We’re going to deliver high-speed internet access, and we will do it efficiently and effectively at the lowest cost to taxpayers.”

Statement from U.S. Secretary of Commerce Howard Lutnick



Vermont's message (not partisan - aligns with most of the states)

- **Provide maximum flexibility and autonomy to the states:** Most states have already successfully deployed broadband through ARPA. States should be given discretion under BEAD for:
 - **Technology choice:** States should maintain authority to choose the best technology that is reliable, redundant, future proof, and the lowest cost to deploy and use.
 - **Permitting:** Streamlining federal permit review to the maximum extent possible and exempting all aerial construction from NEPA will significantly speed deployment.
- **Accelerate the program:** Review is necessary. However, pausing the program during review may disrupt ongoing selection processes and cause added expense and confusion for states and prospective subrecipients.
- **Streamline project approval process:** Remove the final proposal requirement. Requiring the final proposal creates a significant delay in getting shovels in the ground. States can prove to NTIA that we have followed our Initial Proposal via reporting.

Extremely High Cost Per Location Threshold

The “Extremely High Cost Per Location Threshold” is a BEAD subsidy cost per location that determines when states may select a less expensive – technology over fiber that achieves speed/latency requirements of 100/20 Mbps (Not 100/100mbps).

- **States Determine the Threshold:** Vermont sets its own EHCT in defined areas based on factors like terrain, population density, goals, and existing infrastructure.
- **Balancing Act:** The goal is to maximize fiber deployment while ensuring broadband access in all areas, including those with extremely high costs.

Exploring All Options to Ensure Vermont's Goals are Reflected in the Program

- In constant communication with the Vermont Congressional Delegation
- Submitted letter to the Congressional Record Comments on BEAD and the impact of potential changes
- Met with the Senior Counsel for the Majority on House Commerce and Energy Committee
- Testified to Vermont Senate Appropriations
- Briefed the Treasurer and Governor's Staff
- Strong relationships with Other States and Partner Organizations