Arkansas BEAD | Weekly Webinar
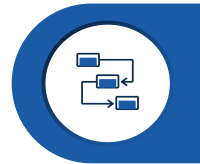
September 18, 2024

ARConnect
The Arkansas State Broadband Office

Agenda

Deep-dive: Census Block Groups (CBGs)

Materials and resources available

Address select Frequently Asked Questions

Next steps

Q&A

Deep-dive: Census Block Groups (CBGs)

Key differences between census block groups and census blocks

	Census Block Group	Census Block
Description	12-digit ID	15-digit ID
Example	050234805023	050234805023059
Count in AR	2,294 (1,428 have BEAD eligible locations in them)	180K+

A block group consists of clusters of blocks within the same census tract that have the same first digit of their four-digit census block number

For example, blocks 3001 - 3999 belong to Block Group 3 for a particular census tract

CBGs will be the basic geographic unit used by applicants to draw their project area maps

Recall | There are four key rules to follow when designing a project area composed of Census Block Groups

Design the project area using the following project area rules

1. **CBGs as building blocks:** Project areas are comprised of one or more CBGs, and bids must include all eligible locations within a selected CBG.

2. **CBG limitations:** An applicant may include the same CBG in a maximum of three bids in Tranche-1.

3. **Contiguity:** Project areas must be contiguous (sharing any amount of border, including a single point or corner).

4. **Contained CBGs:** When a CBG sits within the boundaries of another CBG, the applicant must include both CBGs in its project area if bidding for either.

Materials and resources available

Visit the Arkansas State Broadband Office Resources page for helpful educational materials (Applicant Primer, FAQ's), TA session materials, and more

Arkansas State Broadband Office Resources

Initial Proposal Volume 2 (DRAFT – Not Approved by NTIA) +

Internet Service Provider (ISP) Pre-Registration +

Technical Assistance (TA) +

Application Resources +

Resources you'll find here:

Draft Initial Proposal Volume 2

Pre-registration materials
- Access to Grantor Portal which hosts the application
- Pre-registration user guide
- Statement on confidential information

TA materials
- Applicant Primer
- TA session materials *(updated weekly)*
- FAQ Documents #1 and #2 *(updated weekly)*

Application materials
- Letter of Support template *(new)*

Draft Reference Prices and draft lists of eligible locations (BSLs and CAIs) were published to the website last Friday

See the 6 datasets available under Draft CBG Reference Price Resources

Reference Prices

Location data

CAI data

1
DRAFT CBG Reference Prices
DOWNLOAD

2
DRAFT Listing of Unserved BSLs
DOWNLOAD

3
DRAFT Listing of Underserved BSLs
DOWNLOAD

5
DRAFT Listing of Eligible CAIs
DOWNLOAD

4a
DRAFT Listing of Served BSLs (File 1)
DOWNLOAD

4b
DRAFT Listing of Served BSLs (File 2)
DOWNLOAD

What is included in each of these draft datasets

Dataset	What is provided in this dataset
1 DRAFT CBG Reference Prices	• Each row has an eligible CBG ID • Draft Reference Prices[1] for each eligible CBG[2] • Number of eligible locations[3] (BSLs and CAIs) in a CBG • County where the CBG is located
2 DRAFT Listing of Unserved BSLs	• List of location ID's for every BSL that is classified as Unserved
3 DRAFT Listing of Underserved BSLs	• List of location ID's for every BSL that is classified as Underserved
4 DRAFT Listing of Served BSLs (Files 1 and 2)	• List of location ID's for every BSL that is classified as Served, split into 2 files (due to the large number of rows)
5 DRAFT Listing of Eligible CAIs	• Current, *not finalized* list of CAI location ID's, along with the CBG and county where the CAI is located • *Note: the draft lists of underserved, unserved, and served BSL's are **inclusive** of all locations which are CAIs*

Address Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently asked questions to address today

1. When is Tranche-1 opening?

2. When will project financials be required (project cost and budget information, match commitments, etc.)?

3. How will Reference Prices change between Tranche-1 and Tranche-2?

4. Do Reference Prices limit the allowable Requested Subsidy?

5. How is an applicant scored on workforce support?

6. How does the scoring work for criteria 1.1 BEAD Minimization Outlay and 1.2 Affordability?

The answers to these questions can be found in the weekly FAQ documents

Question	Answer
When is Tranche-1 opening?	The target date is mid-October. However, this is dependent on approval of IPvII by NTIA. Once approved, ARConnect will publish an updated timeline, which will indicate the opening date of Tranche-1.
When will project financials be required (project cost and budget information, match commitments, etc.)?	After the applicant is selected provisionally, at which time the applicant would prepare to share the project's financials (including the benefits of the BEAD subaward) with ARConnect.
How will Reference Prices change between Tranche-1 and Tranche-2?	After Tranche-1, ARConnect will know where ISP interest and competition is lacking, as well as how much funding will be required to make the awards to the applicants who were selected in Tranche-1. Then, ARConnect will **assess the opportunity to increase the Reference Prices after Tranche-1** in the areas which lack competition (i.e., Zero-Bid CBGs).
Do Reference Prices limit the allowable Requested Subsidy?	No, applicants may request any amount of funding them deem necessary for their project area and business case. • To be selected in Tranche-1 for award, you must request below the Reference Price. • To be considered for award in Tranche-2, you must request below twice the Reference Price. • In negotiations, ARConnect could make selections above 2x the Reference Price .
How is an applicant scored on workforce support?	Applicants will have the opportunity to answer questions and demonstrate their workforce support plans and initiatives in the applicant portal. Applicants can refer to the Scoring Rubric (3.1) to see examples of workforce support initiatives that can earn points.
How does the scoring work for criteria 1.1 BEAD Minimization Outlay and 1.2 Affordability?	*See detailed slides after this page*

Backup | Minimization of BEAD Program Outlay Scoring Scale

Scoring Scale Description

A **maximum of 40 points** are available from the Minimization of BEAD Program Outlay criteria

The score will be assessed based on how high or low an applicant's requested subsidy is relative to the reference price for the CBGs within the applicant's project area

A bid that **does not request a subsidy** will receive **40** points

A bid that **requests twice the reference price (or more)** for its project area will receive **0** points

A bid that **requests a subsidy exactly the same as the reference price** for its project area will receive **20** points

1 point corresponds to a 5% variation from the reference price

Assuming a Reference Price of $100K

Requested Subsidy	% of Reference Price	Points
↑		↓
$110,000.00	110%	18 (-2)
$105,000.00	105%	19 (-1)
$100,000.00	**100%**	**20**
$95,000.00	95%	21 (+1)
$90,000.00	90%	22 (+2)
↓		↑

Backup | Affordability Scoring Scale

Scoring Scale Description

A **maximum of 25 points** are available from the Affordability criteria

The score will be assessed based on how high or low their commitments are relative to the below baseline prices for the relevant tier of service:

- **Priority** bids (1/1 Gbps service): **$85** per month
- **Non-priority** bids (100/20 Mbps): **$37** per month

A bid that commits to plans **50% lower than the baseline price** will receive **25** points

A bid that commits to plans **50% higher than the baseline price** will receive **0** points

A bid that commits to plans **exactly the same as the baseline price** will receive **12.5** points

0.5 points corresponds to a 2% variation from the baseline price

Assuming a Priority Bid

Committed Price	% of Baseline Price	Points
↑		↓
$88.40	104%	11.5 (-1.0)
$86.70	102%	12 (-0.5)
$85.00	**100%**	**12.5**
$83.30	98%	13 (+0.5)
$81.60	96%	13.5 (+1.0)
↓		↑

Next steps

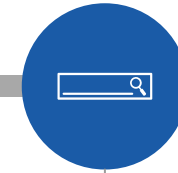Applicants must complete their Pre-registrations to receive access to the bid application

What: The pre-registration application establishes eligibility for an award

When: It is advised to complete prior to the Day 1 of Tranche-1 bidding

How: Visit the Arkansas Broadband Grantor Portal to complete application

Portal Link: https://register.broadband.arkansas.gov/register/bead

Arkansas Broadband Grantor Portal

Introduction

Welcome to the Arkansas Broadband Grantor Portal registration page. This platform is designed for broadband providers looking to participate in the broadband grants offered by the state of Arkansas.

To begin, new users must complete the registration process on this page. Your registration will be reviewed by the Arkansas State Broadband Office. Once approved, you will receive an email providing access to the Arkansas Broadband Grantor Portal.

This portal will serve as your central hub for all interactions with ARConnect, including broadband grant applications, progress reporting, and post-award reimbursements.
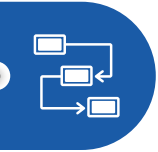
Register

Returning users:

Login

Stay up to date with key resources

Visit ARConnect website to review materials (Applicant Primer, FAQ documents, TA materials) for helpful information on the Arkansas BEAD program (https://broadband.arkansas.gov/bead/)

Download the draft Reference Prices and draft list of eligible BSLs and CAIs to use in bid preparation

Attend weekly sessions hosted by ARConnect
- ➤ Weekly TA sessions on Fridays
- ➤ Weekly Wednesday Webinars

Applicants are encouraged to ask their questions across these sessions, or email them to broadband@arkansas.gov

Q&A

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