Arkansas BEAD Program

Frequently Asked Questions Document 4

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Reference Price Questions

1. If a CBG receives only one bid that requests twice the Reference Price in Tranche-1, will ARConnect increase the Reference Price before Tranche-2?
   If the sole bidder for a CBG does not meet Buy It Now criteria in Tranche-1, the CBG will be considered a Zero-Bid CBG. ARConnect will consider increasing the Reference Prices for Zero-Bid CBGs before Tranche-2.

2. Will ARConnect share the methodology used to calculate the increase in Tranche-2 Reference Prices?
   No, ARConnect will not be publishing this methodology. ARConnect will use data received from bids in Tranche-1 as one input when calculating the updated Reference Prices.

3. Will a bid which requests twice the Reference Price in Tranche-1 be Carried Forward to Tranche-2?
   This bid may be Carried Forward if it does not overlap with a Buy It Now bid in Tranche-1.

Location/Map Questions

4. We are identifying more "eligible locations" than what is reflected on the Arkansas map. It is extremely unlikely that these "missing" locations were eliminated through the Challenge Process. When we identify these "missing" locations, should we consider the cost of reaching them when forming our bids?
   No. For now, you should rely on the draft datasets we publish which list the eligible BSLs. Once approved by NTIA, we will publish updated datasets, and the revised datasets will be the *official* lists of BEAD-eligible locations in Arkansas. You may use BEAD funding to deploy only to those locations.

5. How and when will we be able to relate location ID's to their geolocation? Is that available within the fabric?
   You need to obtain a Tier D license from Cost Quest to see the full data available for each location ID, including the geolocation.

Tranche-1 Questions

6. Will bids from Tranche-1 be made public after Tranche-1?
   The application and bid details from Tranche-1 will not be published. An updated map will be published, displaying which CBGs were selected in Tranche-1, along

with CBGs that are still available for bidding (applicants will also see which CBGs are Zero-Bid).

Carried Forward Bid Questions

7. Are we allowed to change the technology type in a Carried Forward bid in order to reduce costs for Tranche-2? For example, can we propose 100% fiber in Tranche-1 but a hybrid of fiber and fixed wireless in Tranche-2?
No, you may not modify the technology type proposed in your Carried Forward bid. An applicant should apply every bid they intend to submit in the process with their respective technology types in Tranche-1; therefore, in this scenario, both the 100% fiber and hybrid fiber-fixed wireless bids should be submitted in Tranche-1 by taking advantage of the rule that allows the same applicant to submit up to three separate applications for a given CBG. You are permitted to create new bids in Tranche-2 of any technology type(s), but you cannot include CBGs in your new bid which are part of a Carried Forward project area.

8. If we have at least one bid in Tranche-1, we can submit a new bid with a different technology in Tranche-2?
Yes. However, please be aware that you will not be able to bid on CBGs which are part of your Carried Forward project areas (if any) from Tranche-1. We strongly encourage you to submit all of your bids (and technology types) in Tranche-1 for your desired project area(s) and business case(s).

Partial Award and Other Negotiations Questions

9. What happens if a bidder is Partial Award Eligible after Tranche-2 for a part of their project area, but serving this partial area would require funding a transport route through one of the CBGs that it lost? Can the bidder then decline the award?
The funding of a transport route through a CBG that is not part of an applicant's selected project area is considered an allowable cost under BEAD program rules.

10. In the negotiation phase, will ARConnect still try to serve the eligible locations with fiber, if there are funds remaining?
ARConnect would prioritize fiber options if the costs are reasonable, meaning that if there is a feasible opportunity to fund a location with fiber, ARConnect would prioritize that. Also, during negotiations, ARConnect may set the EHCPLT, which determines the per-location cost above which ARConnect may select a proposal for alternate technology.

Low-Cost Plan Questions

11. Can we add other services and products to the low-cost option at an increased price?

No, the low-cost plan option is all-inclusive.

12. Do we need to offer the low-cost option as Internet only?
    Yes. Internet access must be offered with speeds of at least 100:20 Mbps and may not be contingent on the purchase of other bundled services.

13. With the low-cost option, can we provide a range of speed, or do we need to provide a set speed?
    Internet access must be offered with speeds of at least 100:20 Mbps.

14. For the low-cost plan, are we required to work with USAC to determine customer eligibility and enrollment and follow USAC's procedures for updating eligibility?
    NTIA has not yet identified a federal mechanism for determining eligibility. Ultimately each subgrantee is responsible for ensuring that all eligible households within a BEAD subgrant area can access the low-cost plan option.

Pre-registration Questions

15. In the requested Contract and Grant Disclosure and Certification Form, is a subgrantee a "subcontractor?" Also, does the form require the applicant's Federal tax ID (EIN) or the State of Arkansas tax ID?
    No, a subgrantee is not a subcontractor. At this time, the applicant need not provide any subcontractor information or Tax ID information. Please make sure you include your legal company name (not the Tax ID) in the form.

16. How should we answer question 24 and the supplemental questions if our 2023 audited financials are still with the auditors?
    Please answer "no" to question 24 and send your 2022 audited financials. Note, you will be required to supply your 2023 audited financials later.

17. Regarding question 34, how do we provide one answer for our years serving Arkansas and one answer for our years serving outside the state? Or do you want our total years of service both in-state and out-of-state?
    Please input the number of years serving just Arkansas and list the total number of states you have served in the narrative for organizational/managerial capacity.

18. Which source (User Guide Version 2.0 or the pre-registration application portal) should we use as the source of truth for pre-registration application questions? We observed some discrepancies in the questions.
    Thank you for bringing this to our attention. Please use the pre-registration application portal as the source of truth. We have now uploaded a User Guide Version 3.0.

19. In regard to the "AR State Funded BB Deployment Projects" spreadsheet, Column C has a drop-down list of different funding sources (ARPA Rounds 2A-2C, ARPA Round 3, and CARES Act State Funding 1A and 1B). Can you please shed some light on these categories and when each round took place?
Please ensure you are using the latest version (4) named "Other Grant Funded BB Deployment Projects-VER04_20240802."

20. Also in regard to the "AR State Funded BB Deployment Projects" spreadsheet, do you need a list of our publicly funded projects only in Arkansas, or a list of our grant projects across our entire footprint?
In the new version of this template, please list all federal and state programs in your footprint.

21. On question 12, do we simply ask distributors for proof of Build America, Buy America (BABA) compliance?
Manufacturers are putting out their certifications with BABA, so ask suppliers for these certifications.

22. What is the deadline for pre-registration?
Pre-registration is likely open through the end of Tranche-1, but you will not be able to access the Tranche-1 application until your pre-registration is complete.

23. Where can I find a detailed explanation of Build America, Buy America requirements for compliance?
The BABA Compliance and Documentation Requirements and Procedures published by NTIA can be accessed here:
https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/sites/default/files/2024-07/BABA_Compliance.pdf
Additionally for more information, applicants can visit the BABA Compliance and Self Certification page on NTIA's website here:
https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/technical-assistance/BABA_Compliance_and_Self_Certification

Other Questions

24. Does the Professional Engineering (PE) stamp (required with the technical specifications at the provisional selectee stage) need to be from a licensed engineer in the state of Arkansas or an engineer licensed from any state?
PE stamps will need to accompany the technical specifications. The engineer may be licensed in any of the 56 Eligible Entities.