



ARConnect

The Arkansas State Broadband Office

Arkansas BEAD Program

Frequently Asked Questions Document 14

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Application Questions

1. For application Question 12 (“How many years of operational experience do you have?”), is it specific to operations in the state of Arkansas?

No. Years of operational experience is not specific to operations only in the state of Arkansas.

2. Application Question 11 (Local Coordination) asks to upload up to 5 letters of support. Should we combine our letters into one document?

Please upload each letter of support separately.

3. Are letters of support required? How many letters of support can be submitted for Question 11, and are they all weighted the same?

Letters of support are not required for application submission, but they are scored. Any application can have up to 5 letters of support. All letters of support are worth 0.5 points, up to a total of 2.5 points.

4. Can the same letter of support be used in more than one application?

Yes, if you are bidding on a specific geographic area more than once, then you may reuse letters of support. For example, if you have a letter of support from a judge in a particular geographic area, and that area is included in more than one bid, you can reuse the letter of support.

5. Who can sign letters of support?

Letters of support must be from officials within the geographic area you are bidding on. Eligible local government officials could include the following individuals:

- State: State Representative, State Senator
- County: County Judge; Justice of the Peace
- Municipality: Mayor, Member of City Council
- School District: Member of the School Board

6. How should we respond to the questions regarding fair labor practices?

ARConnect cannot provide direct guidance on narrative responses. However, please refer to Section 02.07.01 of IPvII for more details regarding fair labor practices.

7. For questions 14-18 (workforce support section), how does this apply if most of the construction is done by contractors?
These questions are for forward looking plans to help develop a qualified workforce, and the state recognizes that not all prospective subgrantees will have finalized contractor commitments at the time of the application. In this case, answers based on the applicant's expected requirements and practices for contractors may be provided. In addition, answers should not be limited to construction roles.
8. How will answering "yes" or "no" on Questions 14-18 (workforce support section) impact scoring?
Applicants will be awarded 1 point, for up to 5 points, for each workforce support initiative they commit to. For further scoring details, please refer to the scoring rubric, which can be found in IPvII and the Applicant Primer.
9. If we have submitted an application, will we be able to delete it?
No. An application cannot be deleted after it has been submitted. Please ensure the application is complete before submitting.
10. Is there a specific device or browser that should be used for the application portal?
Laptops and computers are best for filling out applications; the portal will not be mobile phone compatible. The portal is most compatible with Chrome, Firefox, and Edge browsers.
11. Will the portal show your score as you go?
No. The portal will not display the score as you answer questions. Applicants should reference the scoring rubric, which is found in IPvII and the Applicant Primer.
12. Is there a way to download all applications into one export?
Applicants will not be able to download all applications into one export. However, they are able to download each application as a PDF. Location data from an application will also be available for download as an Excel file.
13. How are priority projects weighted versus non-priority projects?
In Tranche-1, only priority projects will be eligible for preliminary selection. In Tranche-2, priority projects and non-priority projects will be eligible for preliminary selection. However, an applicant must submit an application in Tranche-1 to be eligible to compete in Tranche-2. Therefore, applicants should submit all feasible applications, both priority and non-priority, in Tranche-1.
14. Will an upload of network designs be required in the application?
Applicants are not required to submit network designs as part of the application. Applicants that are preliminarily selected will be required to provide details on their network design.

15. On Question 1C (baseline price for highest tier of service) what if our highest tier plan is greater than 1G? How will the Broadband Office address affordability if our highest plan is greater than 1G?

The affordability score will be based on the price to be offered for gigabit symmetrical service, irrespective of any higher tiers to be offered by the provider.

16. In Tranche-2, can you bid on a CBG that was not included in any of your Tranche-1 project areas?

Yes. Applicants may bid on available CBGs in Tranche-2 that were not included in their Tranche-1 bids. Remember, however, any CBG subject to a preliminary selection in Tranche-1 will not be available for bidding in Tranche-2.

17. Will there be a positive confirmation that the system has received our bid?

Yes. Applicants will see a notification within the portal that the application was successfully submitted. In addition, every account associated with an organization in the applicant portal will receive a notification when an application is submitted.

18. In order to get the full 3 points for speed to deployment, does the timeline have to be within the 2 years or can it be exactly 2 years?

The timeline must be *less than* 24 months to be awarded the full 3 points for speed to deployment, not equal to 24 months.

19. How can we obtain a CostQuest license to view location data?

Information, as well as the link to request a Tier D license, can be found on the NTIA website here: [CostQuest Licensing | BroadbandUSA](#).

20. Should we remove the organization name in any of the narrative questions in the application?

No, this is not necessary. However, please note that applications will be anonymized during the adjudication process.

21. Will all teammates within an organization receive an email when an application is submitted?

Yes. Every account associated with an organization in the applicant portal will receive a notification when an application is submitted.

22. Is the point system posted somewhere?

Yes. The scoring rubric is listed in IPvII as well as the Applicant Primer, both of which can be found on the [Arkansas BEAD Webpage](#).

23. For our response to Question 1C (the baseline price commitment), what service speed should be referenced?

The price applicants commit to is tied to the technology type selected in Question 1A.

24. Could we choose to charge \$85/month for a plan that is less than 1G?
Applicants should input whatever price is feasible for their organization for the appropriate service type and required speed. Priority bids will be scored based on a reference price of \$85/month for 1/1 Gbps service. Non-priority bids will be scored based on the reference price of \$37/month for 100/20 Mbps service.
25. Is there somewhere in the application that shows the total reference price for all CBGs included in the application?
Yes. The total reference price for a project area is listed in Section 1: Select Locations under the “Saved census block groups” dropdown.
26. Can we work on multiple applications at one time? Will there be a list of our applications to work on each time we are in the portal?
Yes. Applicants may have multiple applications in progress at one time. However, applicants cannot have multiple open side by side. It is crucial to save work on one application before opening another one. Please ensure that you submit all applications once they are complete.
27. Is the User Guide available on the website now?
The Application User Guide is available on the [Arkansas BEAD Webpage](#) under the heading “Application Resources.” You may also download it directly by using this [link](#).
28. What are the key points in adding incremental capacity?
The question about adding incremental capacity can be addressed in several ways such as plans for network upgrades or scaling fiber backhaul. Applicants should coordinate with engineers within their organization for this question.
29. Does the application ask for a budget?
Applicants are not required to submit a budget during the application, only the requested subsidy amount (grant request). The requested subsidy amount should represent, at most, 75% of the project budget unless a waiver is granted by NTIA based on evidence of economic need for a given project. Applicants that are preliminarily selected will be required to provide details of their budget.
30. Does the application ask about match funds?
Applicants are not required to submit match funds during the application, only the requested subsidy amount (grant request). The requested subsidy amount should represent, at most, 75% of the project budget unless a waiver is granted by NTIA based on evidence of economic need for a given project. Applicants that are preliminarily selected will be required to provide details of their match contribution.

Adjudication Questions

31. In Tranche-1, what is the criteria to win Buy-It-Now? Is project area size taken into consideration during deconfliction?

Applicants must meet three criteria to win Buy-It-Now in Tranche-1:

- Criteria 1: The bid is a Priority (100% fiber) bid
- Criteria 2: The bid's Requested Subsidy (grant request) is lower than the cumulative reference price for the project area.
- Criteria 3:
 - If the bid does not overlap with another priority bid, a Buy-It-Now bid must score higher than the Minimum Point Threshold (47.5 points)
 - If the bid overlaps with any part of another Priority bid, a Buy-It-Now bid must score 10 points or 15% higher than the next highest-scoring priority bid

Scale of geographic coverage is not considered during deconfliction, but it is part of the scoring rubric.

32. If a bid's project area is impacted by another bid in Tranche-1, can the bid be withdrawn, or will the bid be carried forward into Tranche-2?

Applicants are not able to withdraw applications. However, if an applicant's project area is impacted due to an overlap with a Buy-It-Now bid in Tranche-1, then that bid will be closed and eliminated from the adjudication process.

33. If a single company bids on the same project area with both a fiber technology bid and a mixed technology bid, is that considered an overlap?

The project areas would, by definition, overlap. However, priority bids are not compared to non-priority bids and are adjudicated first. Therefore, the fiber bid would still be eligible for Buy-It-Now as priority bids are only scored against each other in Tranche-1.

Letter of Credit Questions

34. When is the letter of intent for the Letter of Credit due?

The letters of intent (also referred to as "commitment letters") must be submitted to ARConnect after preliminary selection and prior to ARConnect's Final Proposal submission to NTIA. For applicants that are preliminarily selected at the end of the bidding process, ARConnect must receive a commitment letter from a qualified financial institution or performance bond issuer.

During the application, applicants must certify their commitment to upload a Letter of Credit from an eligible bank or credit union prior to the execution of the subaward if selected, or to follow the waiver requirements. It is recommended that applicants start preparing for this requirement as soon as possible.

Match Commitment Questions

35. Is proof of matching funds required? If so, when will it be required during the application submission?

Preliminary selectees will outline matching funds in their project budgets. Proof of expenditure of matching funds must be provided as part of the reporting at reimbursement milestones.

Reimbursement Milestones Questions

36. If ARConnect approves a grant project budget and schedule, and the subgrantee can complete the project under-budget, is the subgrantee entitled to 100% of the agreed-upon grant amount upon completion?

Arkansas is executing a true fixed amount subaward process. Therefore, the subgrantee will be reimbursed for their full grant amount, assuming compliance with disbursement requirements. Please be aware that grant amounts should represent, at most, 75% of your estimated project budget, to be supplemented by a minimum of a 25% match unless a waiver is granted by NTIA based on evidence of economic need for a given project.