

# The Arkansas BEAD Program

Technical Assistance | "Benefit of the Bargain" (BB) Round Guidance

JULY 7, 2025



# Agenda for today's session

- 1 When is the BB Round open?
- 2 How will applicants bid on locations during the BB round?
- 3 How will Priority bids be defined for the BB round?
- 4 How will subgrantees be selected during the BB round?
- 5 What resources are available?
- 6 Key reminders

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# BB Round Logistics | Major milestones and key dates

Activity/Milestone	Target Date(s)
Project Area Footprints (PAFs) Released	Jun. 30
BB Round Portal Demo	Jul. 2
Credential Registration for New Participants	Jul. 6
BB Round Pre-Registration	Jul. 7 – Jul. 14
BB Round Application Window	Jul. 7 – Jul. 14
Publication of high-level BB Round Results	Jul. 28
Negotiations (if needed)	Jul. 29 – Aug. 1
Final Proposal Public Comment Window	Aug. 11 – Aug. 18
Submission of Final Proposal to NTIA	Aug. 29

**Note** | All target dates are tentative and subject to change



## BB Round Application Window

The Arkansas BEAD Program's Benefit of the Bargain (BB) round is tentatively scheduled to open for 7 calendar days, from Monday, July 7 to Monday, July 14



## Pre-registration

Pre-registration will be reopened to all interested applicants and will run concurrently with the BB application window

Pre-registration is required **only** for **new applicants who have not yet successfully pre-registered** for the Arkansas BEAD Program

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# Project Areas | Project areas will consist of discrete Project Area Footprints (PAFs)



## Project Area Footprints (PAFs)

All BEAD-eligible locations are available to be included in project areas in the BB round for bidding

Project areas will be distinct "Project Area Footprints" (PAFs) consisting of groupings of CBGs.

PAFs were determined based on a variety of factors, such as contiguity, levels of competition and interest in the previous subgrantee selection process, and geographical considerations



## Application Rules for PAFs

Applicants may bid on exactly one PAF per bid; PAFs may not be combined

Applicants may submit a maximum of 2 bids per PAF

Due to utilization of PAFs, participating applicants must submit new bids

ARConnect will allow applicants to propose to exclude select broadband serviceable locations that the applicant determines are excessively high-cost locations from the PAF

ARConnect will solicit bids during the BB Round from other potential applicants for any such eliminated BSL



# Project Areas | ARConnect released the list of 255 PAFs on June 30, the details for which can be found on the ARConnect webpage

## PAF Resources



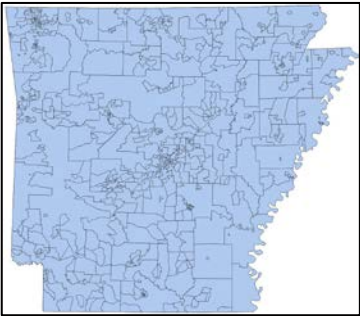
Multiple PAF resources can be found on the ARConnect webpage

## PAF Data Sets

BSL ID		CBG ID	PAF ID
1030963010		050450307023	001
139		CBG ID	PAF ID
103		BSLs	County
144		050450308003	001
107		2 Faulkner County	
050		PAF ID	CBGS
001		050450308003, 050450307023,	108
002		050014803002	4
003		050850203022, 050850203012,	813
004		051250106021, 051250104072	479
005		051039506001	1
006		050134802002	1
007		051399509001	32
008		050310005013, 050310008061,	351
009		051190024052, 051190024071,	23

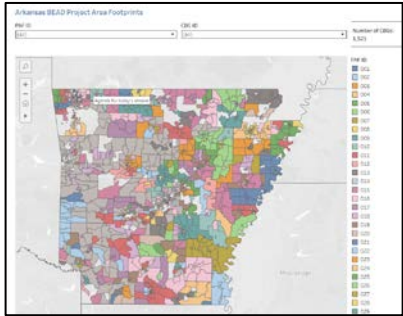
Data sets detail the CBGs, BSLs, and counties included in each PAF

## PAF Shapefiles



Shapefiles can be uploaded to visualization software

## PAF Visualizations



Visualizations allow for easy exploration of PAFs

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# Priority Broadband Projects | ARConnect adopts the updated definition of a Priority Broadband Project, as described in the PN



## Updated Priority definition

### Priority Broadband Project

*A project that provides broadband service at speeds of no less than 100 megabits per second for downloads and 20 megabits per second for uploads, has a latency less than or equal to 100 milliseconds, and can easily scale speeds over time to meet the evolving connectivity needs of households and businesses and support the deployment of 5G, successor wireless technologies, and other advanced services*



## Impacts of updated Priority definition

ARConnect adopts a **technology neutral** approach for its subgrantee selection process. This means that **all** broadband technologies that meet the performance requirements of the IIJA and the NOFO are eligible to participate in the BEAD Program

ARConnect will **not categorically exclude any given technology** and will only reject treatment of an application as a Priority Broadband Project if the project could not meet the statutory definition for a specific project area

**Any applicant** may seek to have ARConnect treat its application as a Priority Broadband Project **regardless of the technology used**. Applicants will submit their request for Priority status during the application process for each bid

Applicants will be required to provide supporting documentation sufficient for ARConnect to assess the network application and determine that the proposed network architecture for each specific project area meets this standard. To assist with this determination, **ARConnect will require all applicants seeking Priority status to provide a Professional Engineer certification** attesting to the accuracy of the scalability claims made in its application

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# Subgrantee Selection | Summary of methodology for selection



## Primary Criteria

In deciding among competing applications covering the same general project area, ARConnect will choose the option with the **lowest cost** based on minimal BEAD Program outlay

ARConnect will select the combination of project proposals with the lowest overall cost to the Program. When comparing competing proposals, ARConnect shall assess **total BEAD funding required to complete the project** and the **cost to the Program per location**

If an application to serve the same general project area proposes a project cost **within 15%** of the lowest-cost proposal received for that same general project area on a per BSL basis, ARConnect will evaluate such competing applications based on **secondary criteria**



## Secondary Criteria

### Preliminary Subgrantees

- 1
  - For locations where ARConnect has already identified preliminarily selected subgrantees, ARConnect will select those applications in the BB Round.
  - To be eligible, the BB round application technology type must match that of the previous selection
  - If no applicant for locations was previously preliminarily selected, ARConnect will evaluate the second criterion

### Speed of Network and Other Technical Capabilities

- 2
  - ARConnect will evaluate the speed, latency, and other technical capabilities of the technologies proposed by prospective subgrantees and select the application with the highest technical capabilities (e.g., speed of network)
  - If all applications have equal capabilities, ARConnect will evaluate the third criterion

### Speed of Deployment

- 3
  - ARConnect will evaluate the prospective subgrantee's binding commitment to provision service by a date and will select the application with the fastest speed to deployment
  - If all applications have equal deployment timelines, ARConnect will select the lowest-cost proposal received for that same general project area.

ARConnect will prioritize Priority Broadband Projects over non-Priority Broadband Projects. In the case where a project area receives no Priority bid OR selecting a Priority bid would incur excessive costs, ARConnect will repeat this process for non-Priority bids

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ARConnect will only provide technical support during the BB round application window

- If you are experiencing a technical issue with the portal, please reach out to [argrants@mbakerintl.com](mailto:argrants@mbakerintl.com)
- If you have questions regarding the application and/or the Arkansas BEAD BB round process, we encourage you to reference the following resources housed on the [Arkansas BEAD Webpage](#):
  - [Applicant Portal User Guide](#)
  - [Guidance on the BB Round](#)
  - [BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice](#)
  - [Application Templates](#) (e.g., Engineering Design Packages, Total Project Cost, Capital Investment Schedule, Project Implementation Plan, Letter of Commitment)

# BB Round Resources | Additional templates added to ARConnect webpage

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## Engineering Design Package for a LEO Project

Date	Version
July 2, 2025	Original Release

Attachment A

**Arkansas BEAD Program - Instructions:**

**Engineering Design Package for a non-geostationary satellite (aka low earth orbit/LEO) Project**

Prepare a "Engineering Design Package" in a pdf format, with clear labeling, indication of scale and a comprehensive legend to explain symbols and abbreviations used on drawings. Adhere to relevant industry standards for LEO satellite service network design and construction.

**Sections**

- 1. Cover Page:**  
Include your organization name as it exists in the BEAD Application Portal, your project number, and the date of your submission.
- 2. Narrative Summary:**  
Identify the amount of network capacity that shall be reserved sufficient to deliver broadband service that meets the BEAD performance and technical requirements to each BSL, simultaneously, in the project area.  
  
Explain how the network design supports the speeds and latency the LEO network will deliver simultaneously to each BSL in the project area.  
  
Specify the age and condition of existing infrastructure and plans to refresh and upgrade that infrastructure. Specify the number of current and planned LEO satellites along with timelines for deployment.  
  
Explain how the network will have built-in redundancies and the ability to support high-capacity usage by end users.  
  
Describe how the network will avoid or mitigate interference with terrestrial wireless networks and other communications network infrastructure.
- 3. Utility Coordination**  
If applicable, address utility coordination planning, including any indication of potential conflicts with existing utility lines and coordination plans for joint trenching.
- 4. Permitting**  
If applicable, include a list of any applicable permits required in the project area and your permitting schedule.
- 5. Network Design:**  
Upload an industry-standard network design diagram (in PDF format), certified by a professional engineer.

A <sup>1</sup>	Area map	A high-level aerial view of the entire service area, showing any relevant
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<sup>1</sup> If your area of coverage is large, please submit as 4 quadrants, 1 per page.  
Naturally connected.

☆ *Only required for applications seeking Priority status*

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## P.E. Certification for Scalability Claims

### Arkansas BEAD Program – Professional Engineer Certification (Scalability)

I, [\_\_\_\_], am a licensed professional engineer in the State of [\_\_\_\_], with license number [\_\_\_\_].

I understand that the term "Priority Broadband Project" means a project that provides broadband service at speeds of no less than 100 megabits per second for downloads and 20 megabits per second for uploads, has a latency less than or equal to 100 milliseconds, and can easily scale speeds over time to meet the evolving connectivity needs of households and businesses and support the deployment of 5G, successor wireless technologies, and other advanced services.

I have reviewed the attached document describing how this application for this specific project meets the criteria set forth above, and certify to the accuracy of the claims set forth therein that the project can easily scale speeds over time to:

- Meet evolving connectivity needs of households and businesses, and
- Support:
  - The deployment of 5G, and
  - Successor wireless technologies, and
  - Other advanced services.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

[PE STAMP HERE]

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# Key reminders for BB Round

1

You should submit your strongest applications, but keep in mind your service commitment if selected

2

You must **submit** within the 1-week application period. No exceptions

3

The applicant portal opens on Monday, July 7 at 12 p.m. CT and closes on Monday, July 14 at 6 p.m. CT