ARConnect

The Arkansas State Broadband Office

ARCONNECT

BEAD PRE-REGISTRATION APPLICANT USER GUIDE

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Version 4.0	October 21, 2024
Version 5.0	July 3, 2025

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CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

FROM THE ARKANSAS STATE BROADBAND OFFICE:

The Arkansas State Broadband Office (ASBO) is dedicated to ensuring the protection of sensitive and proprietary information submitted during the application process.

State law protects information considered proprietary, subject to the specifications of Ark. Code Ann. § 25-19-105 (9):

Specifically, Ark. Code Ann. § 25-19-105 (9) provides in pertinent part,

A.   Files that if disclosed would give advantage to competitors or bidders; and

B.   (i) Records maintained by the Arkansas Economic Development Commission related to any business entity's planning, site location, expansion, operations, or product development and marketing, unless approval for release of those records is granted by the business entity. (ii) However, this exemption shall not be applicable to any records of expenditures or grants made or administered by the commission and otherwise disclosable under the provisions of this chapter.

 To provide transparency and assurance to applicants, our trusted vendor partners, Michael Baker International, Boston Consulting Group (BCG), and Ready.net, have submitted detailed statements below outlining their measures for safeguarding all confidential data.

FROM MICHAEL BAKER INTERNATIONAL:

Michael Baker International, its employees, consultants, and contractors ("MBI") will take reasonable measures to safeguard information clearly marked by the applicant as protected, proprietary, or confidential information, including personally identifiable information ("Confidential Information"), obtained through the grant pre-qualification, application, award, administration, and enforcement process, consistent with applicable law. Except as required by applicable laws, rules, regulations, and legal requirements, MBI will not use or disclose any Confidential Information for any purpose other than for the performance of its grant-related obligations on behalf of the State of Arkansas. Confidential Information will only be shared with employees, consultants, and contractors with a need to know such information for performing those obligations.

MBI may be required to submit financial and performance information and data to the Department of Commerce and/or other federal agencies, employees, and contractors, as necessary to comply with the Notice of Funding Opportunity and other applicable laws, rules, regulations, and legal requirements.

FROM READY.NET

Ready uses a multi-tenanted data model that secures customer data via a uniquely identifiable internal tenant id. This allows us to logically segregate SBO and other data, secure it in our logic tier, and identify/sanitize any tenant data if the need arises.

When data is at rest, it is stored via RSA 128-bit encryption. In transit, our data is sent using encrypted TLS (SSL) 1.2+. Our internal data systems are accessible via secure VPN. All external systems have certificates granted from Google Trust Services LLC - https://pki.goog - or from Amazon Trust Services - https://www.amazontrust.com/repository/. Internal systems have certificates signed using an internal certificate authority, which also uses RSA 128-bit encryption.

We rely on our cloud service providers in AWS and GCP to implement further security measures around the hardware of the systems themselves. In terms of our cloud usage, we regularly review and tighten our firewall policies across our cloud infrastructure. We have implemented continuous vulnerability and intrusion detection + scanning according to SOC2 recommendations, as well as robust logging + monitoring across our production infrastructure. We have regular penetration testing, security audits, and a paid bug bounty program too.

FROM BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP:

Boston Consulting Group ("BCG") maintains strict procedural and technical protocols to ensure that the information shared by each client is kept secure and confidential. In order to properly maintain client confidential information and prevent any conflicts of interest, BCG operates under stringent policies and guidelines which include the following: (i) BCG adheres to strict confidentiality obligations with its clients and ensures that each BCG consultant is trained to abide by these obligations and our internal procedures; (ii) Each individual client team establishes confidential "firewalls" between itself and other client teams working in the same industry and/or practice group (and the rest of the company and all third parties),so that no information is shared between competitor groups or with unauthorized individuals or entities; (iii) BCG fosters (to the extent possible) geographic/physical separation among BCG client teams working with competitive companies in the same industry; and (iv) BCG employs technical security and encryption protocols to ensure all confidential information is safeguarded securely from inadvertent disclosure of any kind.

BCG maintains a best-in-class IT system environment to meet special safeguarding and privacy requirements, ensuring that nonpublic information is not accessed by unauthorized personnel. This separation is continually monitored. Only BCG employees assigned to a specific contract have access to project information. Other BCG employees, regardless of their roles or clearances, do not have access to this data. Client documents are managed in central folders with limited access rights, protected through encryption, complex passwords, access controls, and data loss protection protocols. BCG has implemented security measures to detect and prevent unauthorized access to equipment and data storage devices, including restrictions on email attachments for external correspondence.

OVERVIEW

The purpose of the ARConnect BEAD Pre-Registration process is a way for providers to go through qualifying or gating steps that will determine if they are eligible to participate in the ARConnect BEAD application process. The pre-registration process asks questions about the organization or company and collects information critical to assessing eligibility, not about a specific project area.

All questions related to technical assistance with the Grantor Portal (which includes the pre-registration module) should be directed to: argrants@mbakerintl.com

The intended audience of this Applicant User Guide is the representative from an eligible organization that will be completing the pre-registration application. The application needs to be completed by an officer of the company or legal representative with binding authority to make these attestations.

WHY PRE-REGISTRATION?

The BEAD NOFO (Section IV.D) requires Eligible Entities to ensure that all prospective subgrantees can carry out activities funded by the subgrant in a competent manner and in compliance with all applicable laws. The

NTIA published a Subgrantee Qualifications Evaluation Guide[1] which gives Eligible Entities an overview of the BEAD NOFO requirements and how to evaluate the qualifications of prospective BEAD subgrantees.

Subgrantee qualifications act as gating criteria, meaning prospective subgrantees must meet the standards to be eligible for funding. Please note that gating criteria are not scoring criteria. Gating criteria, also called eligibility criteria, help determine which subgrant applicants are qualified to compete, whereas scoring criteria support the subgrant selection process.

ARConnect is committed to wisely spending the over 1 billion dollars that have been awarded to the State in BEAD funds. Applicants will be required to submit prequalification applications to confirm the following:

1. They meet basic financial, managerial, technical, operational, and other regulatory and disclosure requirements, as described in Sections 2.4.11 through 2.4.17 of ARConnect's Initial Proposal Volume II and by the BEAD guidelines.

2. Certification of applicant's history and planned continuance of compliance with relevant labor laws and disclosure of past violations, as described in Sections 2.7.1 and 2.7.2 of ARConnect's Initial Proposal Volume II and required by the BEAD guidelines.

3. Certification of applicant's willingness to abide by certain BEAD requirements, such as support for BABA and EHP requirements and anti-collusion and conflict-of-interest provisions, as described in ARConnect's Initial Proposal Volume II and pursuant to the Arkansas state policy on anti-collusion.

REGISTERING FOR THE PORTAL:

Any provider interested in applying for BEAD first must obtain an account and login for the Arkansas BEAD Grantor Portal. Please use the following url: https://register.broadband.arkansas.gov/register/bead

Complete the forms and submit. 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. Check your email for log in instructions.

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[1] https://broadbandusa.ntia.gov/sites/default/files/2023-12/BEAD_Subgrantee_Qualifications_Evaluation_Guide.pdf

SUBMITTING A BEAD PRE-REGISTRATION APPLICATION

The pre-registration application process takes place in the ARConnect BEAD Grantor Portal. The Pre-Registration Application module is one of the many modules, and it can be found under the Apply BEAD dropdown.

Once selecting Pre-Registration, a screen with a "Get Started" button, like the one pictured below, will appear.
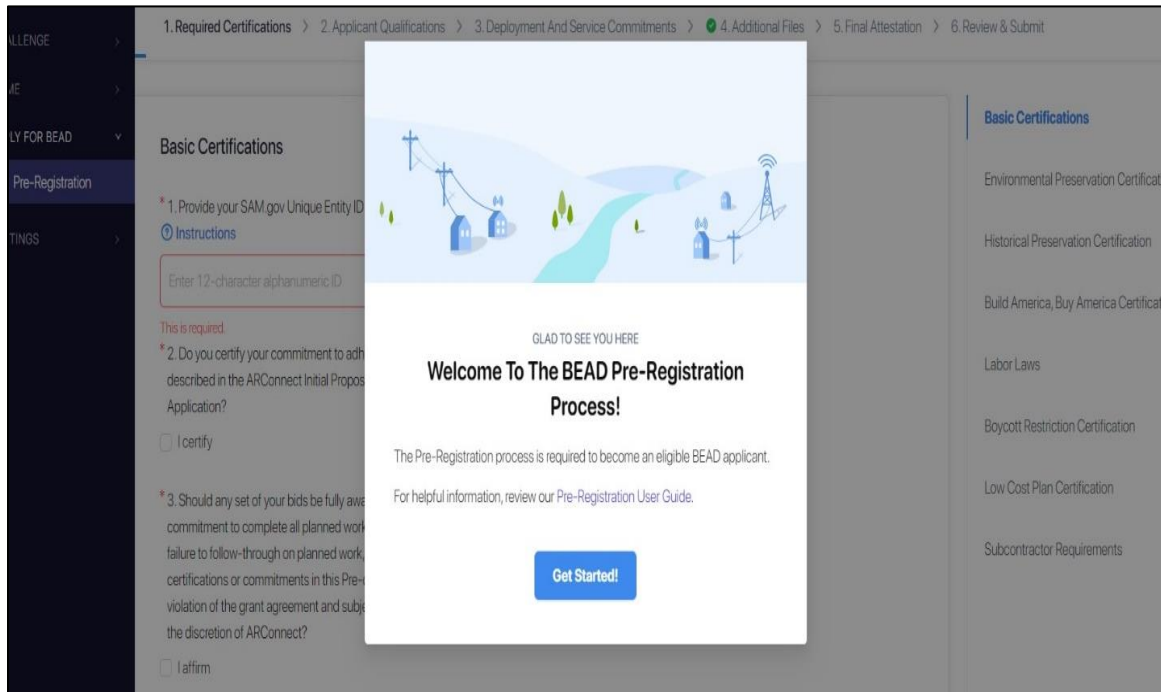
BEAD PRE-REGISTRATION APPLICATION TIMELINE

The original pre-registration application window opened on July 8, 2024, and closed on December 27, 2024. *In order to be in compliance with the new NTIA BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice, ARConnect is re-opening pre-registration from July 6 – July 14th.*

Please note, potential applicants will not gain access to the BEAD application module until the pre-registration application is complete and approved.

If an applicant receives a request for more information, ARConnect requests that the applicant respond as soon as possible and before the submission window ends.

ARConnect will make all reasonable efforts to work with applicants to help them with their submissions.

Assistance is available through:

- Arkansas Grants Program Helpdesk: argrants@mbakerintl.com
- Helpdesk Phone: 501-244-1098

PRE-REGISTRATION APPLICATION PROCESS

NAVIGATING SECTIONS AND SUBSECTIONS

Pre-Registration

● 1. Qualification > 2. Required Certifications > 3. Applicant Qualifications > ● 4. Deployment And Service Commitments

- Use the Next and Back buttons to move sequentially through the application.
- You can also hop to different subsections if you need to review or update information.
- Your progress is tracked throughout the application process.
- Sections will be marked as complete as you finish them, and the percentage complete will be displayed.

Save Application   ← Back   Next →

SAVING YOUR APPLICATION

- Be sure to click Save Application between sessions to ensure your work is saved.
- This allows you to return to your application later without losing any progress.

REVIEWING AND SUBMITTING

- Once you have completed all sections, review your entire application to ensure all information is accurate.
- A Pre-Registration Application is not considered complete unless all questions are answered.
- You can download a PDF version of your application for your records.

ATTESTATIONS

- As part of the pre-qualification application, you will be asked to complete several attestations. Be sure to read each attestation closely before confirming.

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

- After submitting your pre-registration application, you will be redirected to your Application Homepage.
- Here, you can see the status of your application.
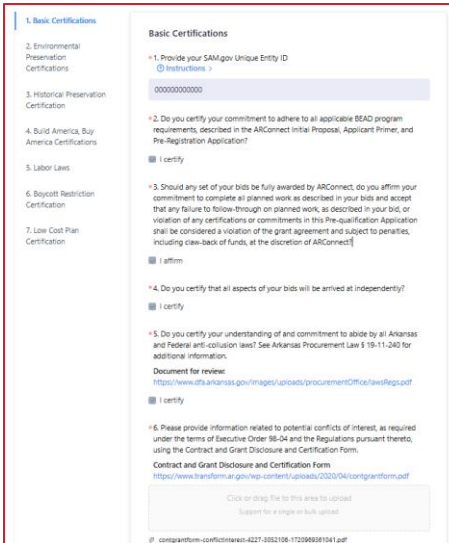- You will receive email notifications regarding updates to the status of your application.

Applicants are encouraged to review the Pre-Registration Prep List (Appendix A) and the ARConnect Pre-Registration Application Questions included in this guide prior to completing the pre-registration application in the portal.

ARCONNECT BEAD PRE-REGISTRATION APPLICATION QUESTIONS

The pre-registration process is broken into segments, including Required Certifications, Applicant Qualifications, Deployment and Service Commitments, Final Attestation, and Review & Submit. The following list includes the questions applicants must answer as part of the pre-registration process on the ARConnect BEAD Grantor Portal.
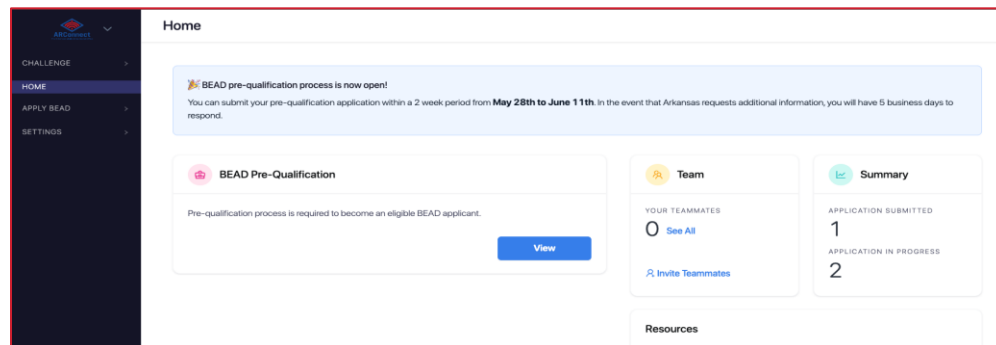
REQUIRED CERTIFICATIONS

1. Provide your SAM.gov Unique Entity ID (If your company does not already have a UEI, please obtain one by visiting sam.gov and registering).

2. Do you certify your commitment to adhere to all applicable BEAD program requirements, described in the ARConnect Initial Proposal, Applicant Primer, and Pre-Registration Application?
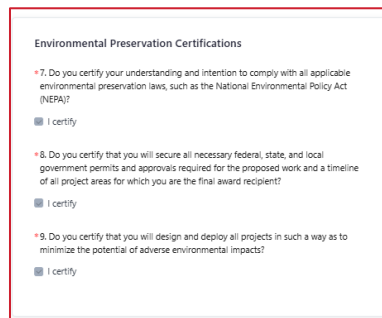
3. Should any set of your bids be fully awarded by ARConnect, do you affirm your commitment to complete all planned work as described in your bids and accept that any failure to follow-through on planned work, as described in your bid, or violation of any certifications or commitments in this Pre-registration Application shall be considered a violation of the grant agreement and subject to penalties, including claw-back of funds, at the discretion of ARConnect?

4. Do you certify that all aspects of your bids will be arrived at independently?

5. Do you certify your understanding of and commitment to abide by all Arkansas and Federal anti-collusion laws? See § 19-11-240 for additional information.[2]

6. Please provide information related to potential conflicts of interest, as required under the terms of Executive Order 98-04 and the Regulations pursuant thereto, using the Contract and Grant Disclosure and Certification Form.[3]

Please note you will need to download this form, save it, fill it out, and then upload it.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION CERTIFICATIONS

7. Do you certify your understanding and intention to comply with all applicable environmental preservation laws, such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)?

8. Do you certify that you will secure all necessary federal, state, and local government permits and approvals required for the proposed work and a timeline of all project areas for which you are the final award recipient?
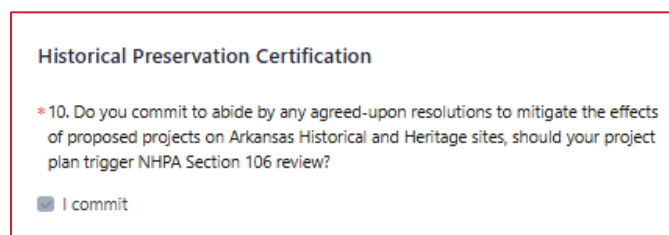
9. Do you certify that you will design and deploy all projects in such a way as to minimize the potential of adverse environmental impacts?

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION CERTIFICATION

10. Do you commit to abide by any agreed-upon resolutions to mitigate the effects of proposed projects on Arkansas Historical and Heritage sites, should your project plan trigger NHPA Section 106 review?

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[2] https://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/procurementOffice/lawsRegs.pdf
[3] https://www.transform.ar.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/contgrantform.pdf

BUILD AMERICA BUY AMERICA (BABA) CERTIFICATIONS

11. Do you certify your understanding and intention to comply with all Build America, Buy America Act requirements?

12. Please provide your detailed plan for a supply chain compliant with Build America, Buy America Act requirements. [document upload required]

LABOR LAW CERTIFICATIONS

13. Do you certify your commitment to abide by all relevant Arkansas and Federal labor laws?

14. Do you certify your historical compliance with fair labor laws?

BOYCOTT RESTRICTION CERTIFICATIONS

Boycott Restriction Certification

*15. Do you certify that you do not currently boycott Israel and will not boycott Israel during any time in which you are in contract with the State of Arkansas for BEAD funding?

Document for review:
https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/wp-content/uploads/710-24-0005-Attachment-H-Boycott-Certifications.pdf

☐ I certify

*16. Do you certify that you will not employ illegal immigrants during any time in which you are in contract with the State of Arkansas for BEAD funding?

Document for review:
https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/wp-content/uploads/710-24-0005-Attachment-H-Boycott-Certifications.pdf

☑ I certify

*17. Do you certify that you do not currently boycott, and for the duration of the contract will not boycott, an energy, fossil fuel, firearms, or ammunition industry?

Document for review:
https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/wp-content/uploads/710-24-0005-Attachment-H-Boycott-Certifications.pdf

☐ I certify

15. Do you certify that you do not currently boycott Israel and will not boycott Israel during any time in which you are in contract with the State of Arkansas for BEAD funding?[4]

16. Do you certify that you will not employ illegal immigrants during any time in which you are in contract with the State of Arkansas for BEAD funding?[5]

17. Do you certify that you do not currently boycott, and for the duration of the contract will not boycott, an energy, fossil fuel, firearms, or ammunition industry?[6]

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[4] https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/wp-content/uploads/710-24-0005-Attachment-H-Boycott-Certifications.pdf
[5] ibid
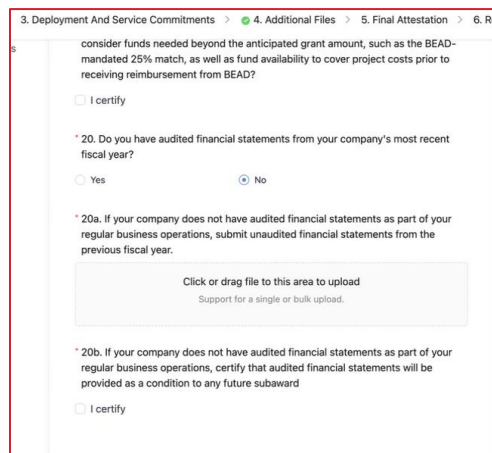[6] ibid

LOW-COST PLAN CERTIFICATION

18. Do you certify that you will offer a low-cost plan as described in the ARConnect Initial Proposal Volume II required in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, 47 U.S.C. §1702(h)(4)(B) and the BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice dated June 6, 2025?

APPLICANT QUALIFICATIONS

FINANCIAL CAPABILITIES

19. Do you certify that you will have access to sufficient funds available to cover all project costs for areas for which you intend to bid? Certification should consider funds needed beyond the anticipated grant amount, such as the BEAD-mandated 25% match, as well as fund availability to cover project costs prior to receiving reimbursement from BEAD?

20. Do you have audited financial statements from your company's most recent fiscal year?   If so, please upload them.

20a. If your company does not have audited financial statements as part of your regular business operations, submit unaudited financial statements from the previous fiscal year

20b. If your company does not have audited financial statements as part of your regular business operations, certify that audited financial statements will be provided as a condition to any future subaward.

MANAGERIAL CAPABILITIES

21. Please provide resumes for key management personnel who may be involved in completion of BEAD-funded projects in Arkansas. At a minimum, this should include resumes for all C-suite officers and at least one senior leader who will be accountable for the success of the BEAD-funded deployment in Arkansas.

22. Please provide organizational charts for parent and subsidiary companies that will be involved in Arkansas BEAD-funded activity. In the organizational charts, include leadership and those accountable for BEAD-funded activity.

23.   Please provide a narrative explanation of managerial capabilities as related to BEAD deployment, include experience and qualifications of key managerial personnel, leadership experience with projects of similar size and scope, any recent or upcoming mergers and acquisitions, and any relevant policies.

TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES

24.   Please provide proof that your organization is currently licensed to do business in the State of Arkansas. At a minimum you must include: Business Entity Registration from the Arkansas Secretary of State and/or a business license from the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration. In addition, you may upload any local licenses or permits that allow you to do business a particular County or Municipality. Please upload full documents via pdf, jpg, etc.

25. Please provide three examples of past work demonstrating experience in designing and successfully delivering projects of similar size, duration, and complexity. Examples may be from material you have produced for other purposes.

26. Please certify that your proposed networks will have the ability to deliver broadband services meeting the prescribed performance criteria to all eligible locations included in your application.

27. Do you certify that you will comply with the cybersecurity and supply chain risk management requirements on pages 70 - 71 of the BEAD NOFO? To the extent you rely in whole or in part on network facilities owned or operated by a third party (e.g., purchase wholesale carriage on such facilities), do you certify that you will obtain attestations from your network provider with respect to both cybersecurity and supply chain risk management requirements on pages 70 - 71 of the BEAD NOFO?

28. Please provide a plan to manage risks in your supply chain, such as mitigation of geopolitical risks, inflationary risks, or other risks that could materially impact project budget or delivery.

Note: You may use the attached template (in the portal) or provide your own language.

29. Please provide a high-level overview of your approach to guaranteeing cybersecurity for all planned networks. Prospective awardees will be required to furnish detailed, project-specific plans. Provide a 200-400 word overview in Word or PDF format.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITIES

30. Please provide the number of years during which you have been providing uninterrupted internet service in Arkansas as well as the number of years providing uninterrupted service in other U.S. states and territories.

31. Please provide the number of locations currently subscribed to internet services through your networks and plans.

32. Please provide a list of all federally or State-funded broadband deployment projects your company is or has been engaged in, along with their funding sources and completion or non-completion timelines. Please download the template from the portal, fill it out, and upload it.

33. Please provide a detailed disclosure of ownership and related companies, as required and set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations Title 47 § 1.2112(a)(1)– (7).[7] "The disclosure shall include a detailed ownership chart showcasing direct and indirect stakeholders, a list of associated FCC-regulated entities, and clear explanations of relationships between entities."

34. Please provide a written narrative of any penalties you or a subsidiary, affiliate, or holding company has incurred in the last 5 years related to deployment projects funded by State or Federal broadband grants.

35. Please provide the name and details of any instances in the last 5 years in which you have been found liable in federal or state criminal proceedings or civil litigation related to federally- or state-funded broadband deployment or services.

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

36. If you have offered voice and/or broadband services, certify your timely submission of FCC Form 477s and, if applicable, a Broadband Deployment Accuracy and Technological Availability Act submission, as required for the period 2022-2023, in compliance with the FCC's rules and regulations. *

*If "No, we did not certify" is selected, you will be asked to explain why an FCC Form 477 was not submitted.

37. Is there a pending or completed enforcement action, civil litigation, or any other matter related to non-compliance or alleged non-compliance against your company? [8]

      37a. If so, please provide an explanation.

38. Have you exclusively operated an electric transmission or distribution service?

      38a. If yes, please provide qualified operating or financial reports that have been filed with the relevant financial institution during the time period of your operations.

      38b. Additionally, do you certify the accuracy and authenticity of these submissions in comparison to the reports provided to the relevant financial institution?

39. Do you certify your compliance and the compliance of other entities participating in the project, including contractors and subcontractors, with all relevant federal labor and employment laws?

40. Please certify your commitment to non-disclosure rules modeled on FCC's prohibited communications rules for auctions. This includes prohibiting applicants from making general public comments or specific comments about their participation intentions or project details for BEAD funding.

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[7] https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-47/chapter-I/subchapter-A/part-1/subpart-Q/subject-group-ECFR7e6f5a3219dc9cd/section-1.2112

[8]8 See pages 74-75 of the BEAD NOFO.

41. If your organization has been awarded funding from other federal or state programs, provide a history detailing compliance with all pertinent federal, state, and local laws.[9]

42. Do you certify your commitment to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws?

DEPLOYMENT AND SERVICE COMMITMENTS

DEPLOYMENT COMMITMENTS

43. Please certify that you will submit all required progress reports and other reports and submit to all periodic reviews as stipulated by ARConnect during final contracting.

44. Please certify the following statement. *"We hereby express our intent to fully review the subaward agreement provided by the Arkansas State Broadband Office (ASBO) if we are selected for a BEAD subaward. We acknowledge that signing the agreement, subject to mutual agreement on the final terms, is a mandatory condition for receiving the subaward funds. Furthermore, we understand that if we are selected for a subaward and choose not to sign the agreement, we may be precluded from future grant opportunities with the ASBO."*

SERVICE COMMITMENTS

45. Please certify your commitment to provide fair and non-discriminatory services to each customer served by BEAD-deployed infrastructure.

ADDITIONAL FILES

46. Please attach any additional files.

FINAL ATTESTATION

47. Please attest that all responses and submitted documents are accurate and comprehensive as of the date of this application being submitted and that this attestation is being completed by an officer of the company, or legal representative, with binding authority to make these attestations.

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[9] As a sub-recipient of federal funds, each provider will need to demonstrate that they understand and have been cooperative with all regulatory and compliance requests from the state and/or federal agency in addition to any local laws. Examples: Timely filing of data location information; accurate monthly and quarterly reporting; notifying all jurisdictional entities of planned construction and obtaining applicable permits. Please name each funding program (Example RDOF) and a brief history of the compliance efforts you undertook. Please note successful outcomes, etc.

APPENDIX A: PRE-REGISTRATION APPLICATION PREP LIST

A list of items or knowledge needed to complete this application include:

☐ Your SAM.gov Unique Entity ID [12-character alphanumeric ID][10]

☐ Completed Contract and Grant Disclosure and Certification Form[11]

☐ Detailed plan for supply chain compliant with Build America, Buy America Act requirements.

☐ Audited financial statements from your company's most recent fiscal year.

☐ If your company does not have audited financial statements as part of your regular business operations, you will need to provide financial statements from the previous fiscal year.

☐ Resumes for key management personnel who may be involved in completion of BEAD-funded projects in Arkansas. At minimum, this should include resumes for all C-suite officers and at least one senior leader who will be accountable for the success of the BEAD-funded deployment in Arkansas.

☐ Organization charts for parent and subsidy companies likely to be involved in BEAD-funded activity in Arkansas including top-level leadership and person accountable for BEAD-funded activity.

☐ A narrative explanation of managerial capabilities as related to BEAD deployment, include experience and qualifications of key managerial personnel, leadership experience with projects of similar size and scope, any recent or upcoming mergers or acquisitions, and any relevant policies.

☐ Proof of current licensing from relevant regulatory bodies permitting your operations in Arkansas.

☐ Three examples of past work demonstrating experience in designing and successfully delivering projects of similar size, duration, and complexity.

☐ A plan to manage risks in your supply chain, such as mitigation of geopolitical risks, inflationary risks, or other risks that could materially impact project budget or delivery.

☐ A detailed plan to guarantee cybersecurity for all planned networks in line with the BEAD requirements as described in ARConnect's Initial Proposal Volume II Section 2.16.4.

☐ The number of years during which you have been providing uninterrupted internet service in Arkansas as well as the number of years providing uninterrupted service in other U.S. states and territories.

☐ The number of locations currently subscribed to internet services through your networks and plans.

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[10] https://sam.gov/entity-registration

[11] https://www.transform.ar.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/contgrantform.pdf

☐ A list of all federal or state-funded deployment projects,

☐ A detailed disclosure of ownership and related companies, as required and set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations Title 47 § 1.2112(a)(1)– (7).

☐ A written narrative of any penalties you or a subsidiary, affiliate, or holding company has incurred in the last five years related to development projects funded by State or Federal broadband grants.

☐ The name and details of any instances in the last five years in which you have been found liable in federal or state criminal proceedings or civil litigation related to federally- or state-funded broadband deployment or services.

☐ If there is a pending or completed enforcement action, civil litigation, or any other matter related to non-compliance or alleged non-compliance with page 75 of the BEAD NOFO, you will need to provide an explanation.

☐ If you have exclusively operated an electric transmission or distribution service, you will need to provide qualified operating or financial reports that have been filed with the relevant financial institution during the time period of your operations.