Delivering for Our Communities:
Broadband Implementation
Updated May 16, 2022

Delivering for Our Communities is a series of issue briefs that describe the major federal funding opportunities available due to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). This document examines funding opportunities applicable to **broadband infrastructure** and describes the types of projects that may be funded with the federal grants. Community advocates can dive deeper into these opportunities to develop proposals and pressure policymakers to advance equity and improve educational outcomes.

IIJA Programs on Broadband Infrastructure

Broadband Equity, Access, and Development Program (BEAD) – $42.5 billion allotted

BEAD is intended to fund last-mile broadband development. States must submit implementation plans to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) in order to qualify for funding. States must prioritize service to "unserved" locations (less than 25Mbps download/3Mbps upload), "underserved" locations (100Mbps/20Mbps), and "community anchor institutions" (schools, libraries, and hospitals). States may spend BEAD funding on data collection, broadband mapping, installing internet infrastructure, and providing cheaper service or devices.

Affordable Connectivity Program – $14.2 billion allotted

The Affordable Connectivity Program supports home internet service for low-income households. Households are eligible if they earn less than twice the federal poverty line and/or if a member of the household has used a safety net program within the past year. The program provides a $30 monthly benefit on home internet bills, and a one-time discount of $100 to purchase a computer. Eligible individuals can apply through either the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) website or their internet service provider (ISP).

Digital Equity Program – $2.75 billion allotted

Consisting of three grant programs (Digital Equity Planning, Digital Equity Capacity, and Digital Equity Competitive Grants), the Digital Equity Program provides funding for helping under-resourced communities take advantage of existing broadband connections. It provides digital literacy training, workforce development, device access programs, and other digital inclusion measures. It does not fund the construction of new broadband connections. While only states may apply for the Digital Equity Planning and Digital Equity Capacity programs, the competitive grants

are open to a range of applicants, including nonprofit and public sector organizations.

[Distance Learning, Telemedicine, & Broadband Program (ReConnect)](#) – **$2 billion allotted**

The ReConnect program funds construction and improvement of rural broadband infrastructure. The funding comes in the form of grants, loans, matching grants, or a grant/loan combination. Projects funded by the program must provide at least 100Mbps download/20MBps upload speeds. $5 million of each grant must be used to establish and expand cooperatives to offer broadband services. Corporations, Tribal governments, and local governments are eligible to apply.

[Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP)](#) – **$2 billion allotted**

TBCP provides funding to Tribal governments for broadband infrastructure, affordability, and adoption. The grant is available on a competitive basis and can cover anything, including feasibility studies and digital skills training.

[Enabling Middle-Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program](#) – **$1 billion allotted**

The Enabling Middle-Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program funds grants to support construction, improvement, and acquisition of middle-mile infrastructure. Any project that does not currently connect directly to an end user is potentially eligible for these grants. Eligible applicants include state governments, Tribal governments, nonprofits, cooperatives, and utility, technology, or telecommunications companies.

Summary of IIJA Programs on Broadband Infrastructure

Program Name	Disbursing Agency	Grant Type[1]	Amount of Funding	Key Stakeholder	Timeline
Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment	NTIA	Formula	$42.5 billion	State broadband coordination offices	Before May 15, NTIA will publish the requirements that a grant application must meet
Affordable Connectivity	Wireline Competition Bureau	Direct subsidies to internet service providers (ISPs)	$14.2 billion	ISPs	Individuals can currently apply to their ISP for funding
Digital Equity	NTIA	2 Formula; 1 Competitive	$2.75 billion	State broadband coordination offices	Before June 30, NTIA will publish the requirements that a grant application must meet
ReConnect	Rural Utilities Service	Competitive; Loan; Combination	$2 billion	State/local governments	Rural Utilities Service typically opens submissions in late fall
Tribal Broadband Connectivity	NTIA	Competitive	$2 billion	Tribal governments	NTIA will reopen submissions at some point
Enabling Middle-Mile Broadband Infrastructure	NTIA	Competitive	$1 billion	State/local governments	Before May 15, 2022, NTIA will publish the requirements that a grant application must meet

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[1] For details about different types of grants, check out PCAF's explainer on federal implementation processes.

Funded ARPA Programs on Broadband Infrastructure

The funding for most ARPA programs has already been appropriated and disbursed to state, local, and Tribal governments. These sub-national governments have until the end of 2022 to decide what to do with the funds—and the money must be completely spent by the end of 2026. However, many states and municipalities have not yet allocated all of their funding toward particular projects. Many are including the funds in general revenue, rather than putting them toward the programs the money was intended to finance or have not yet made a final decision on how to use all of the funding. **Check with your state/local government to ensure that funds are being used, and that the use supports equity in your community rather than special interests.** You can look up how state, city, county, and Tribal governments have used ARPA funding so far.

Emergency Connectivity Fund – $7.17 billion allotted
- Helps schools and libraries ensure that students can learn safely and fully participate in remote learning

Bureau of Indian Education (BIE)-funded School Education Stabilization Fund – $850 million allotted
- Supports BIE-funded schools/dormitories, Tribal colleges/universities, and programs that support Tribal Education Agencies

Institute of Museum and Library Services Grants – $200 million allotted
- Allows libraries to safely open and implement public health protocols
- Provides residents with accessible wifi, internet hotspots, education and digital resources, and workforce development opportunities

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