# Arizona Center for Rural Health
# State Office of Rural Health Webinar Series

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ARIZONA TELEMEDICINE PROGRAM

SOUTHWEST TELEHEALTH RESOURCE·CENTER TRC

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
MEL & ENID ZUCKERMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Center for Rural Health

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# Victoria Fine & Megan Beresford

**Stand Out from the Rest: Untangling Telehealth, Broadband, and Digital Equity to Give Your Grant a Competitive Edge**

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
MEL & ENID ZUCKERMAN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH
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# Please reach out!

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# Objectives & Agenda

## Webinar Purpose

During this webinar, we aim to provide you with an understanding of:

- The USDA Rural Utilities Service Distance Learning and Telemedicine (RUS-DLT) Grant and if your initiatives are competitive for this funding

- BEAD funding and Digital Equity Act (DEA) funding, including where we are in the timelines for each and what actions to be taking

- Areas to develop and focus on to be competitive in both BEAD and Digital Equity applications

## Topics

- RUS-DLT
- Digital Equity Act
- BEAD

# Learn Design Apply Inc.

## Who We Are

Learn Design Apply Inc. makes funding attainable. We offer an array of services to both public and private sector clients so that they have less work, better odds, and more funding. With our help, customers gain the confidence they need to boost their grants know-how and build capacity.

**We've helped our customers win over $720 million in funding (and counting!)**

# Today's Presenters

Victoria Fine, Funding Strategist

*Loves K-Pop and speaks Russian*

Megan Beresford, Director of Broadband Programs

*Won 'Best Wrong Answer' in a National Crossword Puzzle competition. Three different years.*

# USDA RUS-DLT

# The Basics

**Rural Utilities Service Distance Learning & Telemedicine Grant Program**

- Provides funding for **interactive, "real-time"** distance learning and / or telemedicine projects that give rural residents access to content and / or services – **helping to bridge the digital divide!**

- Annual **technology-focused** competitive grant

- Almost any type of organization is eligible to apply (including formal and informal consortiums)

- Very consistent and reliable source of funding (there have been many awardees who have received funding multiple times!)
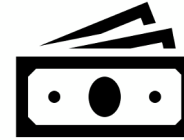
# The Details

## Project Design & Scoring

- Projects typically connect multiple rural service sites (called end-user sites) together and / or to a hub site (which could be urban or rural) for content sharing

- In certain project designs, content can also be shared with mobile units (e.g., ambulances, mobile learning stations) or individuals in their homes

- The **physical location** of project sites is key for scoring

## Budget & Expenditures

- 3-year grant period

- **MATCH:** 15% of the Federal Request (about 13% of total project costs)

- **AWARD RANGE:** Between $50 K and $1 M (project budgets between $57.5 K and $1.15 M)

- Funds must go toward technology hardware, software, and associated services primarily being used for interactive distance learning and / or telemedicine

## Timing

- Next cycle is expected **early 2024**

- Typically a 60-day application cycle once grant is posted

# Budget Items

## ✅ Eligible Expenditures

- **Capital Expenditures –** interactive distance learning or telemedicine equipment, video infrastructure, ancillary core network devices necessitated by the project, internal wiring, software, licensing, digitally connected peripheral devices, **cybersecurity (new in FY2023)**
- **Up to 20%** of the grant request can be spent on broadband related expenditures
- **Cloud Services,** if adequately justified
- **Remote Instruction** that is a capital expenditure
- **Technical Assistance / Training** (up to 10% of the grant request)

## 🚫 Ineligible Expenditures

- **Recurring Expenses –** transmission costs, existing operational costs, *salaries,* benefits, contractual, supplies, etc.
- **No Indirect Costs!**
- **No Evaluation Costs!**
- **Unrelated technology purposes** All technology should directly enable / support live, interactive distance learning / telemedicine. For instance, a laptop computer can be eligible, but it must allow for high quality video collaboration.

# Competitiveness Breakdown

## Rurality

**Up to 40 points**

Averaged across all end-user sites (sites receiving content / services)*

- Exceptionally rural area: population 5,000 and under – **40 points**

- Rural area: population 5,001-10,000 – **30 points**

- Mid-rural area: population 10,0001-20,000 – **20 points**

- Urban area: population over 20,000 – **0 points**

**End-user sites cannot be located near large metro areas**

## Economic Need

**Up to 30 points**

Averaged across all end-user sites (sites receiving content / services)*

- SAIPE percentage greater than or equal to 30 percent – **30 points**

- SAIPE percentage greater than or equal to 20 percent but less than 30 percent – **20 points**

- SAIPE percentage greater than or equal to 10 percent but less than 20 percent – **10 points**

- SAIPE percentage less than 10 percent – **0 points**

## Special Considerations

**Subject to change annually**

Points given once per project

For FY 2023, **10 points** were given for projects that:

- Serve Tribal Lands, Farmworker Communities, or Distressed Energy Communities;

- Support Native American Language(s); or

- Support Mental Health Services

*Exception: In a non-fixed project (e.g., a project where individuals are reached in their homes), scoring is based on the location of the hub site

# Project Ideas

**School to School –** *sharing teachers & courses, enrichment*

**School to Health Center –** *school-based health, prevention / wellness, mental health / substance abuse programming*

**School to Higher Ed –** *dual enrollment, teacher training*

**Higher Ed to Higher Ed –** *connecting satellite campuses to expand course offerings, bridging programs, workforce development*

**Libraries & Other Community Centers –** *lifelong learning, adult education, workforce development, enrichment*

**Medical Centers to Clinics –** *primary & specialty care delivery, continued medical education (CME)*

**Clinic to Clinic or Hospital to Hospital –** *sharing doctors, dentists, nurses or allied health professionals; sharing CME, wellness & prevention programs*

**Mental Health & Substance Abuse Clinics to anyone –** *delivering behavioral health and / or substance abuse treatment, education, therapy, etc.*

**State/Local Orgs –** *connecting organizations together to share employee learning / training (DOH, Head Start, WIBs, etc.), corrections projects (educational opportunities, training, mental health supports, telemedicine), health departments connecting to rural communities for information sharing*

*Limited only by your imagination!*

# Recommended Immediate Steps

Check on your organization's SAM registration
(if serving as applicant)

## 1 Project Vision

- Distance learning project, telemedicine project, or both?

- Which departments, programs, services, teams, etc. will be involved?

- Will you involve external partners?

## 2 Locations

- Gauge competitiveness of potential project sites

- If external partners are involved, start getting location commitments

- Which sites will send out services and / or receive services?

## 3 Consider the Budget

- Rough project size / number of sites

- Rough technologies (project budget max is $1.15 M per application)

- Who is providing the match? Will external partners contribute to the match?

# Digital Equity Act

# What is Digital Equity?

"Digital equity
is a condition in which all
individuals and communities
have the information
technology capacity needed
for full participation in our
society, democracy, and
economy."

**1** Affordable, robust broadband internet service.

**2** Internet enabled devices that meet the needs of the end user.

**3** Access to digital literacy training.

**4** Quality technical support.

**5** Applications and online content designed for self-sufficiency, participation and collaboration.

Source:
- National Digital Inclusion Alliance, n.d.

# Challenges in DE Work

**1** **Insufficient Infrastructure**
*Outdated or lacking broadband, high implementation costs*

**2** **Poor Device Quality**
*Reliance on phones and cellular connections, Covid-era computers and tablets*

**3** **Poor Digital Literacy or Awareness**
*Awareness around community benefits of the internet, equity is a buzzword*

**4** **Poor Integration of Resources**
*Misalignment between leaderships, unprepared resources*

# Digital Equity Act Programs

## State Digital Equity Planning Grant

$60M formula grant for states and territories to develop digital equity plans.

## State Digital Equity Capacity Grant

$1.44B formula grant program for states and territories distributed via annual grant programs over 5 years to implement DE projects and support DE plans.

## Digital Equity Competitive Grant

$1.25B discretionary grant program (~$125M for 5 years) to implement DE projects. Applicants: political subdivisions of state, Tribes, nonprofits, CAIs, local education agencies, entities that do workforce development.
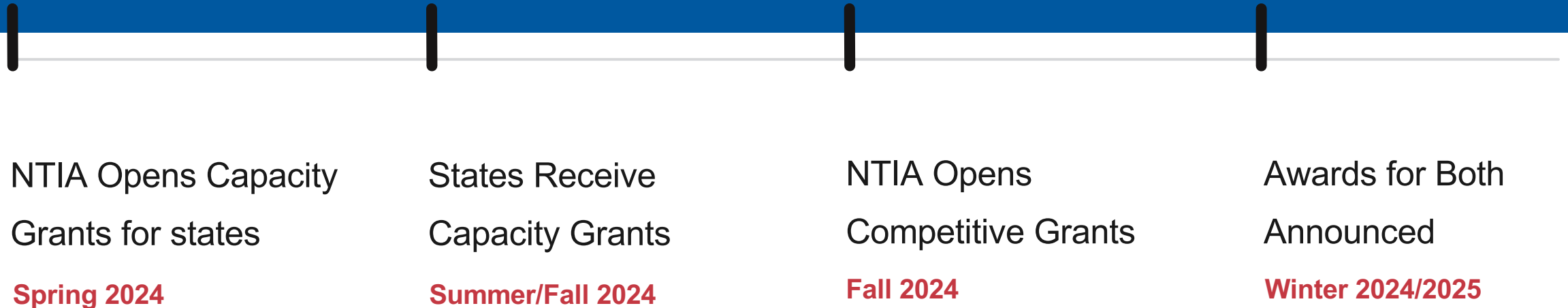
# Uses for DE Funding

➔ To develop and implement digital inclusion activities that benefit covered populations.
➔ To facilitate the adoption of broadband by covered populations in order to provide educational and employment opportunities to those populations.
➔ To implement, consistent with the purposes of this subchapter- training programs for covered populations that cover basic, advanced, and applied skills; or other workforce development programs.
➔ To make available equipment, instrumentation, networking capability, hardware and software, or digital network technology for broadband services to covered populations at low or no cost.
➔ To construct, upgrade, expend, or operate new or existing public access computing centers for covered populations through community anchor institutions.
➔ To undertake any other project and activity that the Assistant Secretary finds to be consistent with the purposes for which the Program is established.

Admin: 10%
4-year implementation period
Federal share may not exceed 90%

# Digital Equity Act Program Timeline

NTIA Opens Capacity Grants for states

**Spring 2024**

States Receive Capacity Grants

**Summer/Fall 2024**

NTIA Opens Competitive Grants

**Fall 2024**

Awards for Both Announced

**Winter 2024/2025**

# What To Think About Now

## Coordination

Competitive applications will have multiple partners. Herding cats can be a challenge, so begin these efforts and discussions now.
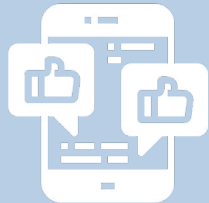
## Resources

DE work has historically been understaffed and underfunded, with capacity often being an issue. Think creatively about what your resources are and how to best utilize them.

## Program Creation

Competitive applications will require a well thought out, robust, and comprehensive grant program. 'Stuff' is not enough.

## State Recognized Tribes

State recognized Tribes are not eligible in the NTIA program. They may be in the state programs. Contact your DE/Broadband office to advocate for these Tribes.

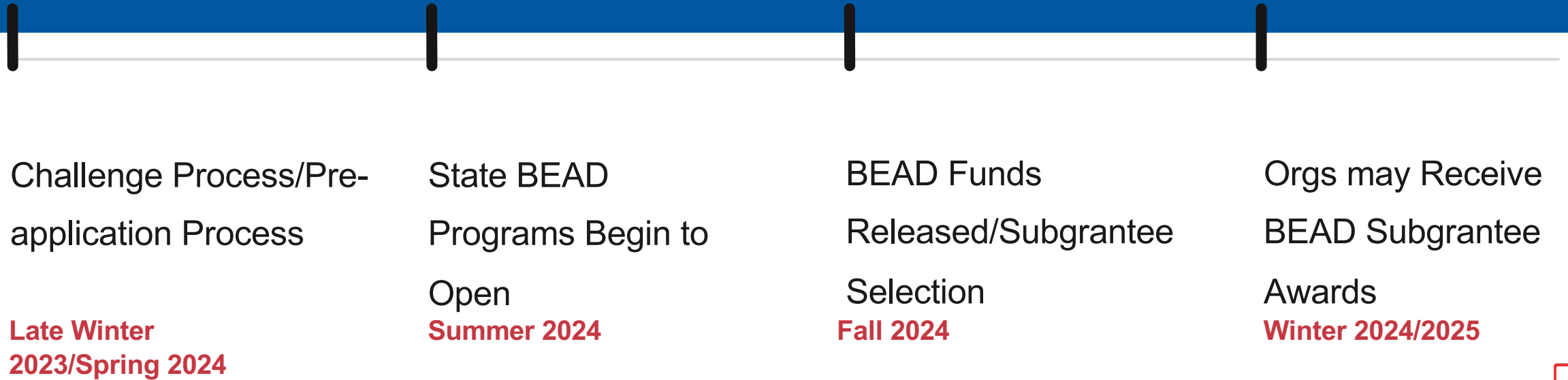# Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program (BEAD)

# Remind Me About BEAD

The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program provides $42.45 billion to expand high-speed Internet access by funding planning, infrastructure deployment and adoption programs in all 50 states, Washington D.C., Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

States will open grant programs to distribute these funds to eligible entities.

# BEAD Timeline

Challenge Process/Pre-application Process

**Late Winter 2023/Spring 2024**

State BEAD Programs Begin to Open

**Summer 2024**

BEAD Funds Released/Subgrantee Selection

**Fall 2024**

Orgs may Receive BEAD Subgrantee Awards

**Winter 2024/2025**

# What To Think About Now

## Location Challenges

Depending upon your organization type, you may or may not be eligible to challenge the served/unserved status. Coordinate with your city/town to do so.

## Know Where You Stand

CAIs are required by BEAD to receive 1 Gbps symmetrical service as a part of this program.

## Partners

Consider your role. Can you provide letters of support? Can you sign a Community Benefit agreement? Get in touch with your state office to see who is active in your area.

## Benefits

Providing benefits to CAIs can make service providers more competitive. See what you can get from partners!

# Resources



1. USDA RUS-DLT Website

2. National Digital Inclusion Alliance

3. Office of Educational Technology

4. NTIA Internet for All - Programs

# Any Questions?

# Thank you!

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