

West Virginia secures \$1.2 billion in broadband funding; among first states in the country allowed to request BEAD funds

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CHARLESTON, WV — Gov. Jim Justice **announced**

(<https://www.youtube.com/live/GRqOmbU4Xo0?feature=shared&t=489>) today that West Virginia has secured \$1.2 billion in Broadband Enhancement Access and Deployment (BEAD) funding, which will be used to improve reliable high-speed internet for residents statewide.

The Office of Broadband, which is part of the West Virginia Department of Economic Development, helped obtain these funds, and West Virginia is among the first states in the nation to secure this NTIA approval.

“I’m thrilled that we secured this funding because broadband advancements are extremely important for West Virginia,” Gov. Justice said. “From day one, my administration has supported the expansion of broadband to every corner of the State, and I am excited to see the results of this historic investment in broadband technology and infrastructure.”

The U.S. Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA), approved West Virginia’s BEAD Initial Proposal Volume II (IPVII) late last week.

The BEAD program is a \$42.45 billion state grant program authorized by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The application process includes 20 program requirements divided into two separate sections known as Volume I and Volume II.

West Virginia’s Initial Proposal Volume I was submitted in November 2023 and approved January 29, 2024. Volume I outlines the State’s process for executing a challenge process, through which units of local government, nonprofit organizations, and broadband service providers can challenge whether a location should be eligible for BEAD funding. Volume II, submitted in December

2023, addresses key elements of the State's BEAD implementation plan.

Please visit **broadband.wv.gov** (<https://broadband.wv.gov/>) for program details and updates, broadband mapping, and other information.

**Click here for more information about the BEAD Program
(<https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/funding-programs/broadband-equity-access-and-deployment-bead-program>)**

"Everyone on our team understands the urgent need to expand broadband to all West Virginians," West Virginia Secretary of Economic Development, Mitch Carmichael, said, "We cannot overstate the importance of this critical infrastructure to West Virginia's economic future. The West Virginia Office of Broadband has worked incredibly hard through a rigorous process to reach this point and we look forward to working with NTIA and all of our federal partners to move as quickly as possible to deploy broadband throughout the State."

In anticipation of BEAD Initial Proposal approval, West Virginia launched its BEAD Pre-Application Phase on March 18, 2024. The mandatory Pre-Application Phase enables applicants to demonstrate eligibility and capacity to compete for grants to expand broadband infrastructure to BEAD eligible locations. The BEAD Full Application Phase is scheduled to begin in May 2024. Within one year of the IPvII approval, West Virginia must submit a Final Proposal to include projects that will reach all unserved and underserved locations.

Following the allocation of funds for broadband infrastructure projects, any remaining funds can be used for workforce development, digital skills training, and other eligible uses, according to the approved plan. The West Virginia Office of Broadband is the administrator of the BEAD program and numerous programs for broadband.

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