

Oklahoma to Receive \$797.4 million for High-Speed Internet Buildout

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Broadband Office (OBO) has been notified it will receive \$797.4 million in federal grant funds to expand the state’s broadband infrastructure to provide high-speed internet access statewide.

The funding will come through the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program. When added to other grant funds already announced, the OBO will administer some \$1.2 billion to fulfill its five-year mission to provide access to affordable and reliable high-speed internet service to at least 95 percent of Oklahomans.

Governor Kevin Stitt said high-speed internet access is critical to Oklahoma’s future.

“When I came into office, Oklahoma was ranked in the bottom ten for broadband access; we are now taking important steps to fix this,” said Governor Stitt. “I look forward to continuing to work with federal, municipal, and private partners to expand high-speed internet access for Oklahomans all across the state.”

Lt. Governor Matt Pinnell, who serves as a member of the Oklahoma Broadband Governing Board, said this grant will be a game changer for Oklahoma.

“Broadband is essential to economic development and one of the most critical infrastructure challenges of our time,” said Pinnell. “This grant will help us ensure all Oklahomans have access to affordable and reliable internet, so we can continue to grow and thrive as a state.”

OBO Executive Director Mike Sanders said today’s announcement provides a big boost to efforts to connect all Oklahomans to the economy and society of the 21st Century.

“Access to high-speed internet service is no longer a luxury. It has become a necessity,” Sanders said. “Our expansion efforts will provide much-needed access to commerce, health care, and personal communications to all Oklahomans, regardless of whether they live in urban or rural areas.”

The funding for Oklahoma comes from a nationwide allocation of \$42.5 billion for the BEAD Program. Each state’s share is based on the number of people who do not have access to high-speed internet service. The latest version of the FCC Broadband Map shows more than 700,000 people – about one-in-six Oklahomans – lack such service.

The primary use of BEAD grants will be to fund the construction of fiber optic broadband lines to unserved homes and businesses through a competitive subgrantee process with Internet Service Providers (ISPs). Funds will also be used to help with development of workforce training. Affordability will be addressed by requiring ISPs that participate to offer an affordable high-speed option.

The money will be provided to the OBO over the next few years. Initial funding of some 20 percent is expected in about one year, with the remainder anticipated to be received starting in three years.

About the Oklahoma Broadband Office

Oklahoma has launched an aggressive effort to ensure fast and affordable broadband internet service is available throughout the state and the Oklahoma Broadband Office is a key component.

Created by the Legislature in May 2022, the office is on a five-year mission to develop and administer grant programs to make affordable, high-speed internet available to all Oklahomans. It also coordinates efforts throughout the state to ensure broadband expansion is conducted effectively and efficiently.

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