BROADBAND OFFICE

SC Broadband Advisory Council

Enabling South Carolinians to Thrive in the Global Digital Economy

South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff | Jan. 16, 2024

Agenda

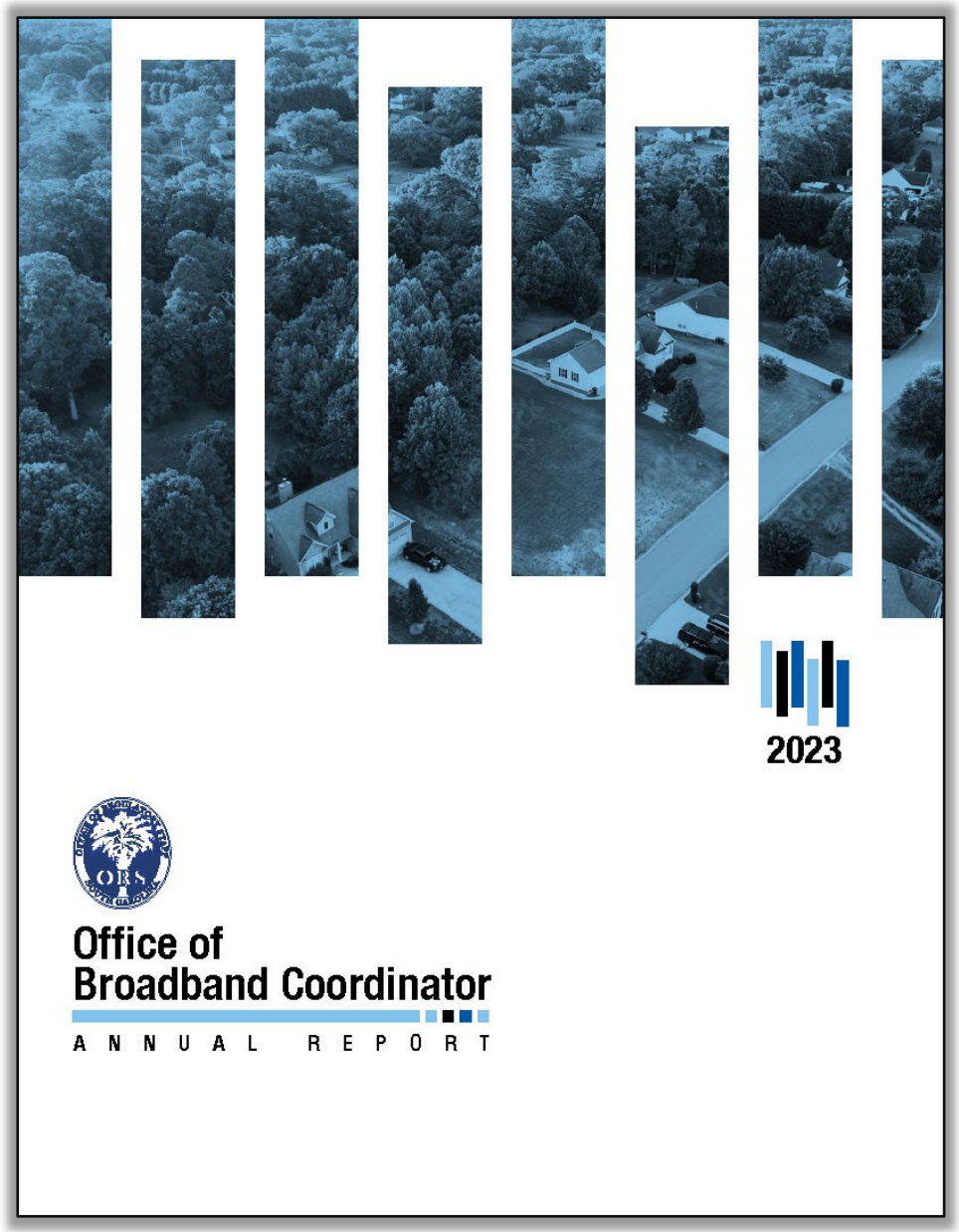
Welcome / Roll Call **Review / Approve Minutes** **Introductions**	Jim Stritzinger, Co-Chair Anna Berger, Co-Chair
SC Broadband Office Update	Jim Stritzinger, ORS
Digital Opportunity	Tom Allen, ORS
Other Business	All
Next Meeting – Tuesday, Apr. 9, 2024 **Adjourn**	All

SCBBO Invests $112.3 Million to Connect 16,000+ Homes!

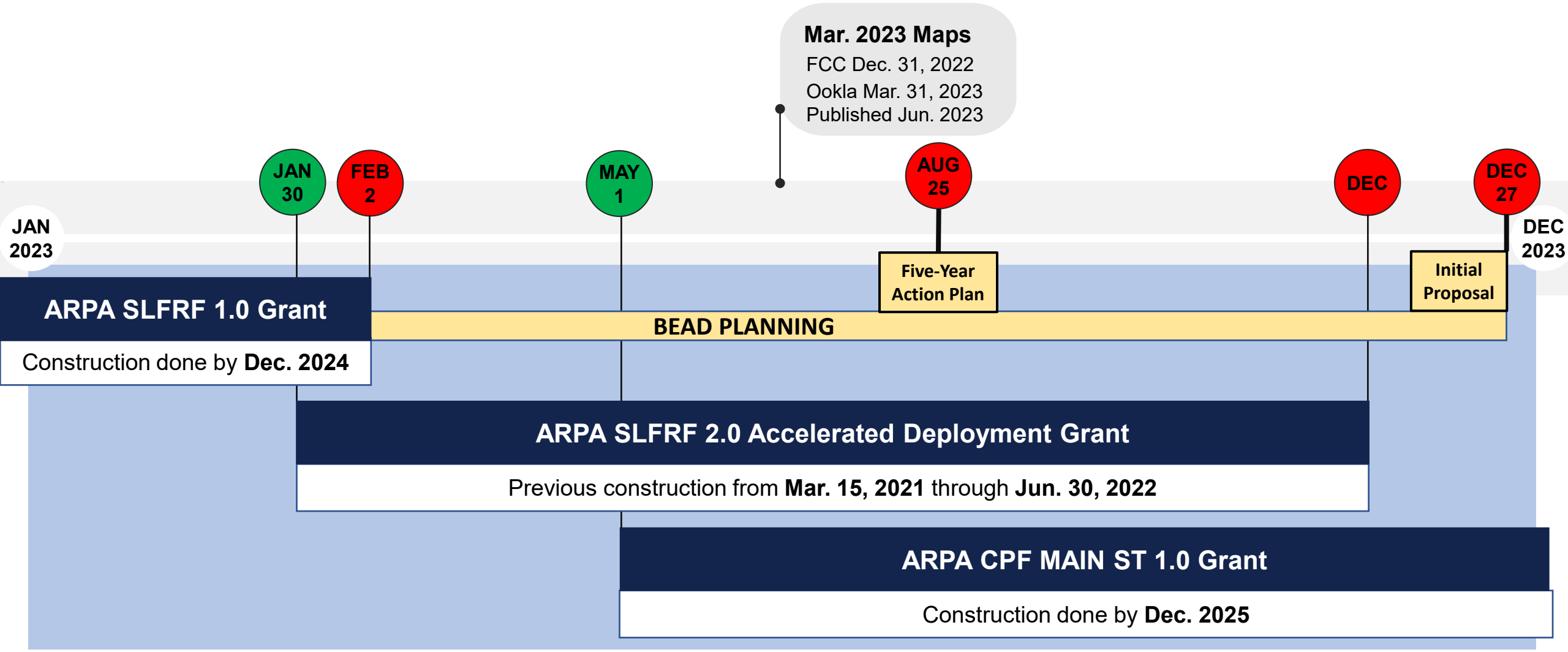
BROADBAND OFFICE

For Immediate Release

December 18, 2023


2023
Office of
Broadband Coordinator
ANNUAL REPORT

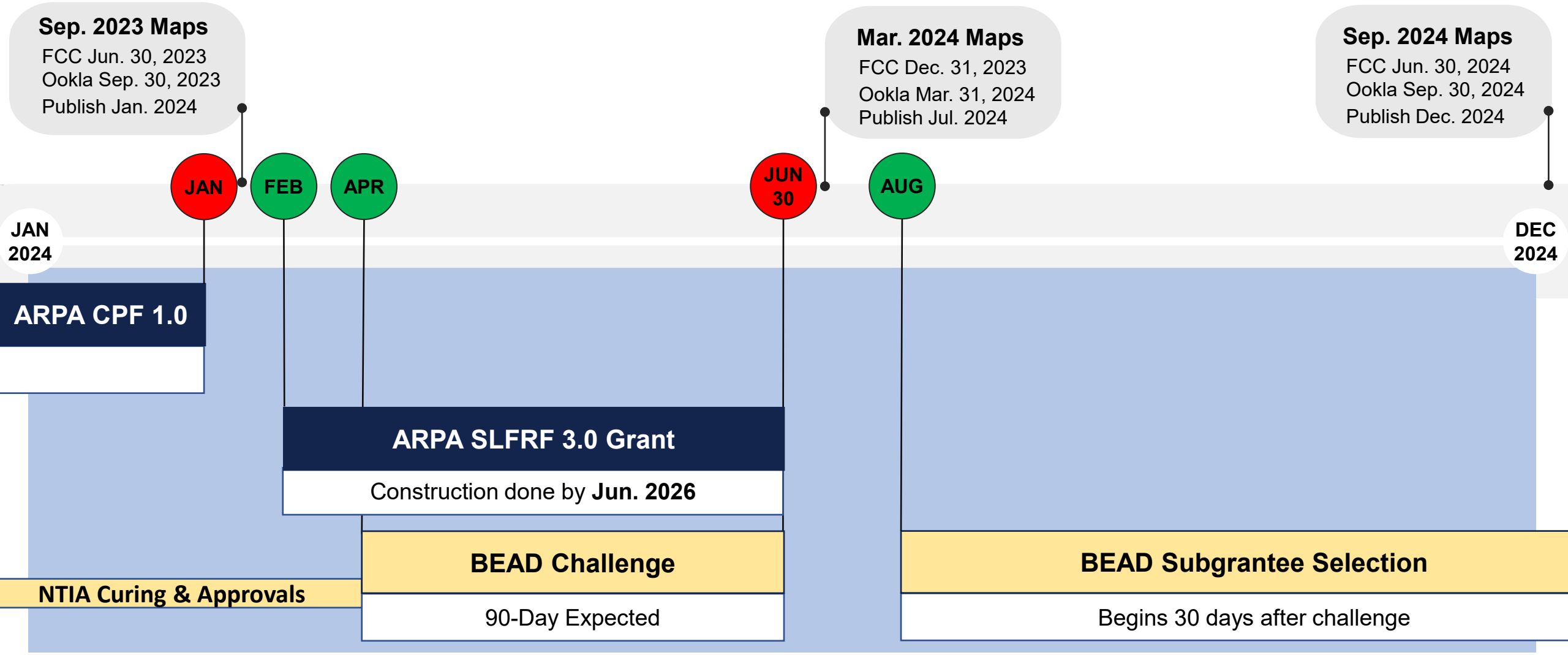
2023 BROADBAND GRANT PROGRAMS



** All dates are subject to change without notice.*

ORS.SC.GOV/Broadband

2024 BROADBAND GRANT PROGRAMS



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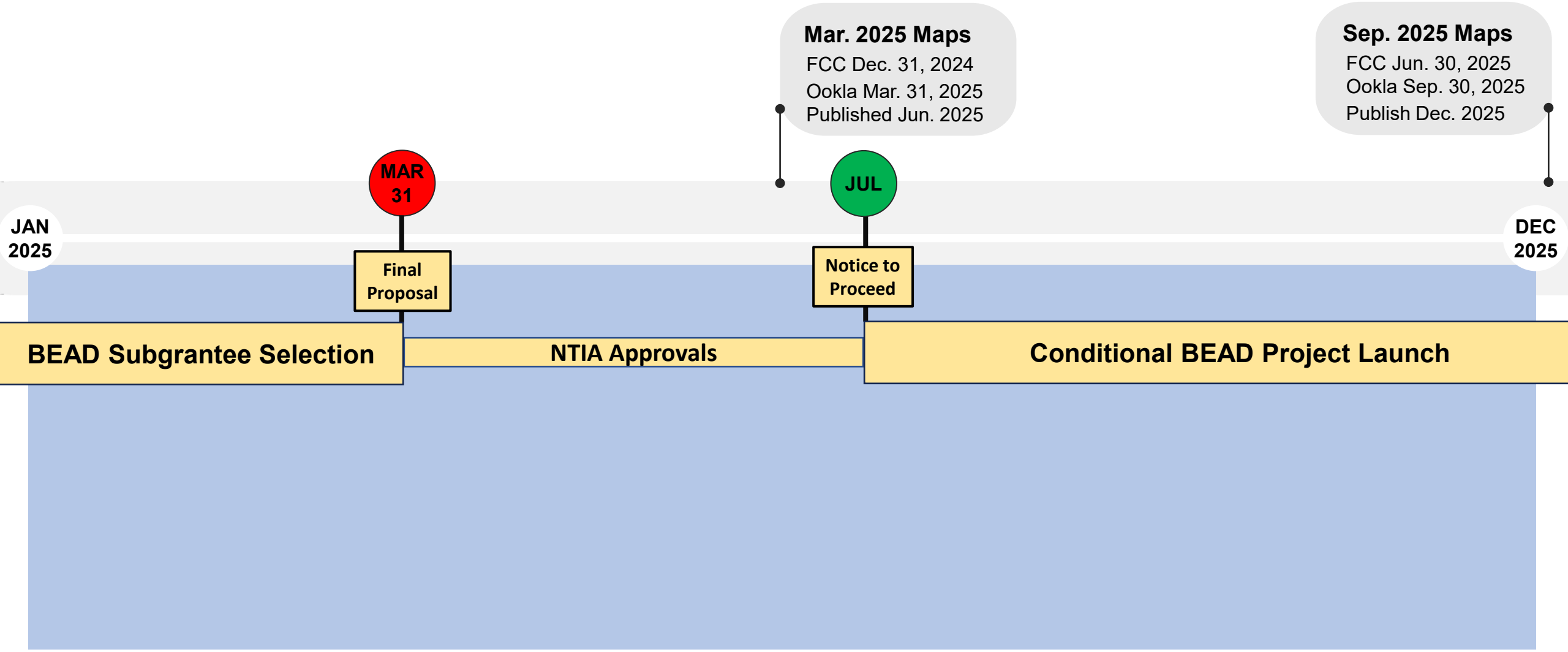
ORS.SC.GOV/Broadband

2025 BROADBAND GRANT PROGRAMS



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FCC Items

BSL Fabric Accuracy

-> SCBBO Recommends Shapefile BDC Reporting

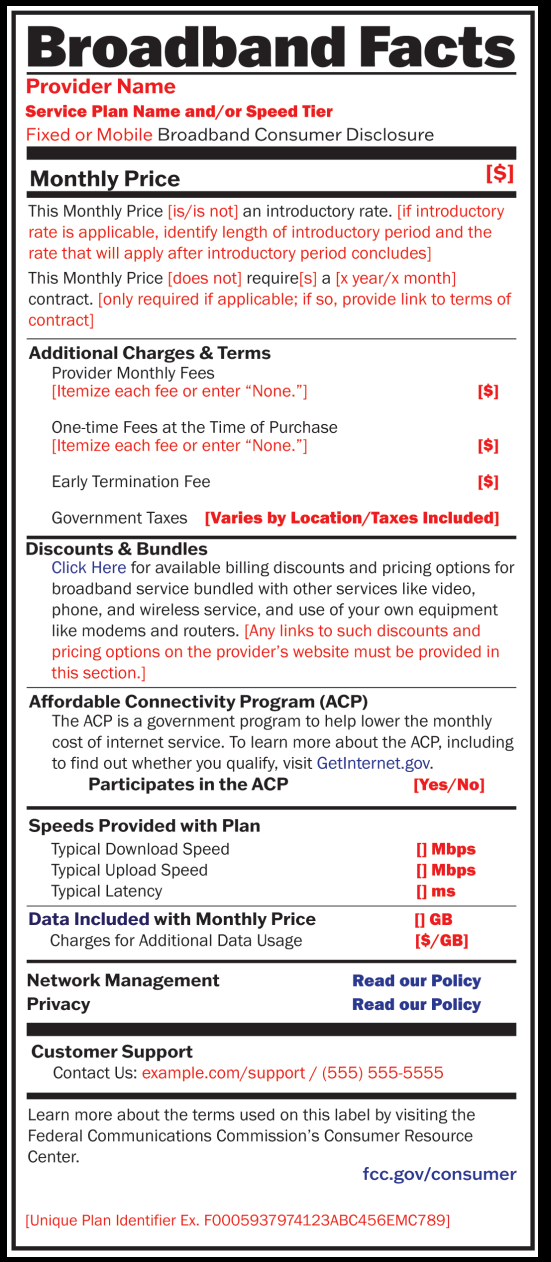
BDC Filing

-> Accuracy is mission-critical

Broadband Nutrition Labels

> 100,000 Subscriber Lines — **April 10, 2024**

< 100,000 Subscriber Lines — **October 10, 2024**



Broadband Facts

Provider Name

Service Plan Name and/or Speed Tier

Fixed or Mobile Broadband Consumer Disclosure

Monthly Price [$]

This Monthly Price [is/is not] an introductory rate. [if introductory rate is applicable, identify length of introductory period and the rate that will apply after introductory period concludes]

This Monthly Price [does not] require[s] a [x year/x month] contract. [only required if applicable; if so, provide link to terms of contract]

Additional Charges & Terms

Provider Monthly Fees
[Itemize each fee or enter "None."] [$]

One-time Fees at the Time of Purchase
[Itemize each fee or enter "None."] [$]

Early Termination Fee [$]

Government Taxes [Varies by Location/Taxes Included]

Discounts & Bundles

Click Here for available billing discounts and pricing options for broadband service bundled with other services like video, phone, and wireless service, and use of your own equipment like modems and routers. [Any links to such discounts and pricing options on the provider's website must be provided in this section.]

Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)

The ACP is a government program to help lower the monthly cost of internet service. To learn more about the ACP, including to find out whether you qualify, visit GetInternet.gov.

Participates in the ACP [Yes/No]

Speeds Provided with Plan

Typical Download Speed [] Mbps
Typical Upload Speed [] Mbps
Typical Latency [] ms

Data Included with Monthly Price [] GB
Charges for Additional Data Usage [$/GB]

Network Management Read our Policy
Privacy Read our Policy

Customer Support

Contact Us: example.com/support / (555) 555-5555

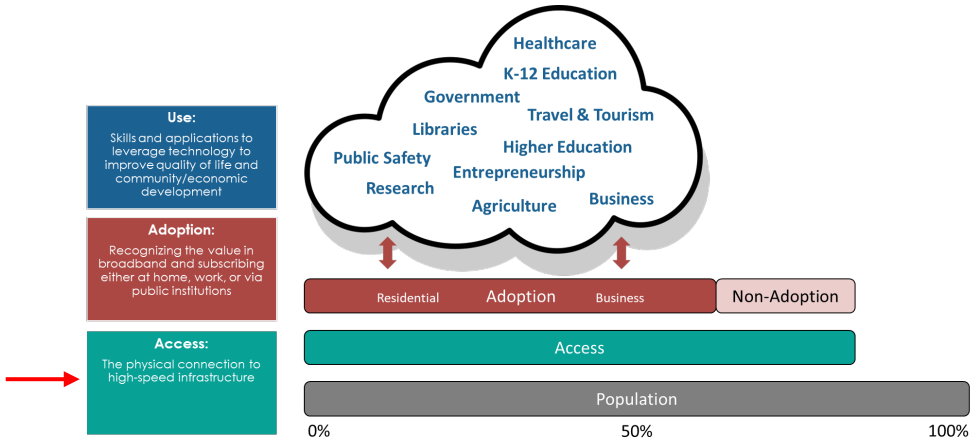
Learn more about the terms used on this label by visiting the Federal Communications Commission's Consumer Resource Center.

fcc.gov/consumer

[Unique Plan Identifier Ex. F0005937974123ABC456EMC789]

About BEAD

- **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)**
  - Digital Equity (DE) – Adoption and Use
  - Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD)



    - ✓ **$551.5 million allocation for SC**
    - ✓ **Broadband Deployment**
      - Must provide access to <u>all homes and businesses</u> throughout state (first)
      - Next, must connect Community Anchor Institutions (< 1Gbps symmetric)
    - ✓ **Non-Deployment**
      - Only occurs after SCBBO confirms enough allocation available to provide access to <u>all homes and businesses</u> throughout state
    - ✓ **Initial Proposal**
      - Volume 1 – BEAD Challenge Process
      - Volume 2 – Establishment of BEAD Grant Program

Required information:

- Challenger's Name
- Challenger's Organization Type (Local Government, Tribal Government, Nonprofit Organization, and Broadband Provider)
- Challenger's Organization Name
- Challenger's Email (Email that will receive access pin and be used to submit challenges)
- Challenger's Phone Number (*Optional)
- Organization Website
- FCC Provider ID (*Required **ONLY** for Broadband Providers)
- Organizational Email to receive Rebuttals (SCBBO recommends the Challenger's organization to designate or stand-up a new email to receive the time sensitive links for challenges)
- Proof of Employment or Role with Organization
- Terms and Conditions
- Consent

BEAD Challenge Period Participation Form

South Carolina Broadband Office's (SCBBO) BEAD Challenge Period:

Based on the NTIA BEAD Challenge Process Policy Notice, as well as the SCBBO's understanding of the goals of the BEAD program, the proposal represents a transparent, fair, expeditious, and evidence-based challenge process. The SCBBO's BEAD Challenge Process allows challenges from **nonprofit organizations, units of local and tribal governments, and broadband service providers.** SCBBO will review survey responses to verify the eligiblity of the proposed challenger and provide accepted challengers with a pin required for their challenge submissions, via email.

Permissible challengers are allowed to challenge:

-The identification of eligible CAIs, as defined by the Eligible Entity,
-CAI BEAD eligibility determinations,
-BEAD eligibility determinations for existing broadband serviceable locations (BSLs),
-Enforceable commitments, or
-Planned service.

The SCBBO will not publicly post any personally identifiable information (PII) or proprietary information, including subscriber names and customer IP addresses. All information posted will be public information already available online on the FCC National Broadband map. To ensure all PII is protected, the SCBBO will review the basis and summary of all challenges and rebuttals to ensure PII is removed prior to posting them on their website. Additionally, guidance will be provided to all challengers as to which information they submit may be posted publicly.

The SCBBO will treat information submitted by an existing broadband service provider designated as proprietary and confidential consistent with applicable federal and South Carolina state law. If any of these responses do contain information or data that the submitter deems to be confidential commercial information that should be exempt from disclosure under state open records laws or is protected under applicable state privacy laws, that information must be identified as privileged or confidential by the submitter. Otherwise, the responses will be made publicly available. These requirements will be published on the ORS website as part of the challenge process and will further be referenced within grant guidelines and grant agreements pertaining to the BEAD program, which will be inclusive of any other ancillary data, documentation, and/or information that may be required through the course of the project period of performance.

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Challenger's Name*

Please provide us with your first and last name.

Challenger's Organization Type*

Please select the challenger type that best represents you and your organization.

-Please select-

https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/542c54d32e2d4affb902c6d082bfe300

Currently shared only within the organization, so you need to sign into AGOL

Challenger's Organization Name*

Please provide us with the name of the organization you represent.

Challenger's Email*

Please provide us with your email address within your organization.

This email address will serve as your access to the SCBBO's BEAD Challenge Portal along with a Pin which will be emailed to you once the SCBBO accepts your submission. **Please do not share email and pin within your organization, each prospective challenger should submit a survey response to receive their unique pin for their email address.**

Challenger's Phone Number

Please provide us with your phone number should SCBBO need to reach out for further information.

Organization Website*

Please provide us with the link to your organization's website.

Organizational Email to receive Rebuttals*

In addition to submitting challenges, you and your organization may need to respond and rebute challenges upon the organization. **Please provide an emaill address that will receive links for the rebuttal phase of the challenge process.** SCBBO recommends the organization standing up a unique email specifically for these emails to prevent these time sensitive links being lost within inboxes or delegated to a singular person. Should multiple people from your organization submit reposnese to gain access to the SCBBO's challenge portal, this email **MUST** be the same across your organization.

Proof of Employment or Role with Organization*

Please upload a file that provides evidence that you are employed or hold a role with the organization you designated above. SCBBO may be in contact with you for more proof should the one provided not satisfy.

Drop file here or select file

Terms and Conditions*

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ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below.

Clicking on the "I agree to the Terms and Conditions" check box below indicates that:
· You have read the above information
· You voluntarily agree to participate
· You are at least 18 years of age

If you do not wish to participate in the Survey, please do not check this box, close this browser window, and/or navigate away from this webpage.

☐ I agree to the Terms and Conditions

Consent*

I permit SCBBO to share the information I have input into this form with the federal government following the requirements set forth by BEAD Guidance and Policies.

☐ I agree to the Terms and Conditions

Submit

The Digital Divide

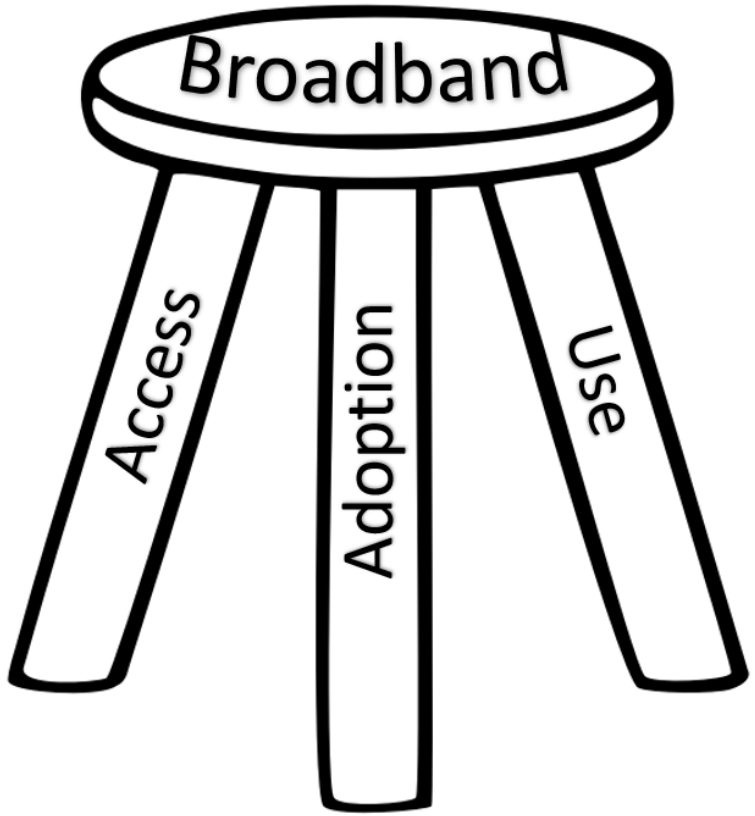
Digital Opportunity in South Carolina

South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff | January 16, 2024

Digital Opportunity Department

Closing the “Gap”

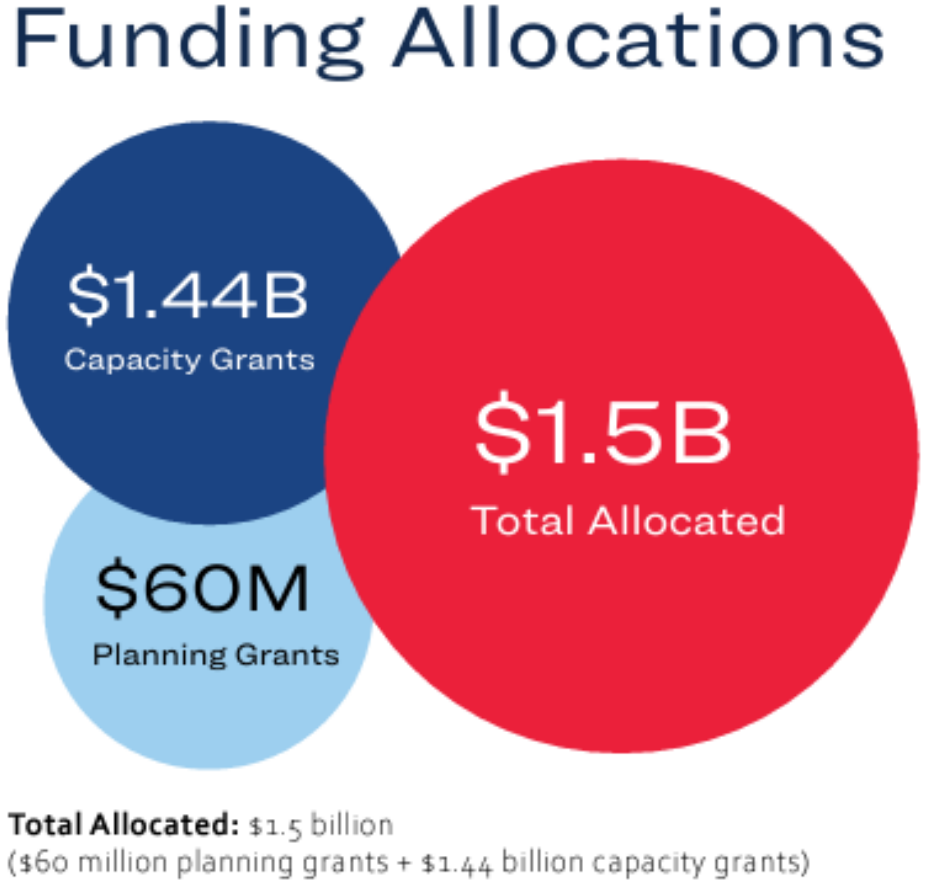
Digital divide: The digital divide is the gap between those individuals with access to technology, affordable broadband, and digital literacy training and those that do not.



Funding

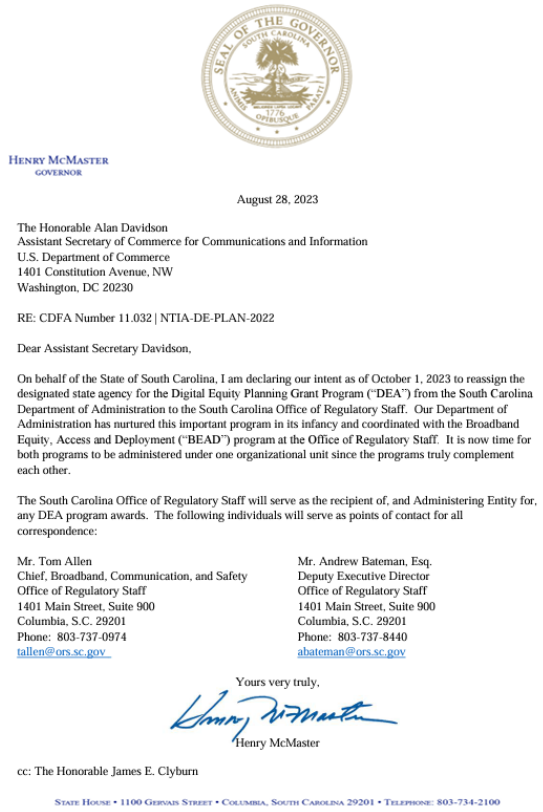
Infrastructure Investments & Jobs Act (IIJA) is a $65 Billion investment to develop and implement systemic solutions to bridge the digital divide.

- **Digital Equity Act (DEA)** included in IIJA broadband section- allocated $2.75 billion for Digital Equity.
  - State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program: implement DE Plan over 5 years (1.44$ Billion)
  - Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program: implement Digital Opportunity projects over 5 years. (1.25$ Billion)



Digital Opportunity Department

On October 1, 2023, the Digital Equity Office was transferred from the South Carolina Department of Administration to the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) and re-named the Digital Opportunity Department (DOD).



HENRY MCMASTER
GOVERNOR

August 28, 2023

The Honorable Alan Davidson
Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

RE: CDFA Number 11.032 | NTIA-DE-PLAN-2022

Dear Assistant Secretary Davidson,

On behalf of the State of South Carolina, I am declaring our intent as of October 1, 2023 to reassign the designated state agency for the Digital Equity Planning Grant Program ("DEA") from the South Carolina Department of Administration to the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff. Our Department of Administration has nurtured this important program in its infancy and coordinated with the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment ("BEAD") program at the Office of Regulatory Staff. It is now time for both programs to be administered under one organizational unit since the programs truly complement each other.

The South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff will serve as the recipient of, and Administering Entity for, any DEA program awards. The following individuals will serve as points of contact for all correspondence:

Mr. Tom Allen
Chief, Broadband, Communication, and Safety
Office of Regulatory Staff
1401 Main Street, Suite 900
Columbia, S.C. 29201
Phone: 803-737-0974
tallen@ors.sc.gov

Mr. Andrew Bateman, Esq.
Deputy Executive Director
Office of Regulatory Staff
1401 Main Street, Suite 900
Columbia, S.C. 29201
Phone: 803-737-8440
abateman@ors.sc.gov

Yours very truly,

Henry McMaster

cc: The Honorable James E. Clyburn

STATE HOUSE • 1100 GERVAIS STREET • COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA 29201 • TELEPHONE: 803-734-2100

DOD Vision

Our vision is for all South Carolinians to have access to affordable, reliable, high-speed internet and to gain the necessary skills to benefit from this technology.

How does the DOD accomplish the vision?

The DOD inherited a draft of South Carolina's Digital Equity (DE) Plan from the Department of Administration. The DE Plan has the goals for Digital Opportunity in SC as well as the steps to achieve them.

Affordable Connectivity Plan (ACP)

2023	Households	Participation	Monthly Support
December 31	**423,856**	**48.4%**	
November	415,387	47.4%	$10,943,882
October	402,360	46.0%	$11,858,593
September	395,060	45.1%	$11,703,468
August	379,848	43.4%	$11,713,589
July	368,300	42.1%	$11,257,471
June	358,948	41.0%	$11,003,260
May	346,233	39.5%	$10,751,406
April	334,908	38.2%	$10,247,402
March	324,332	37.0%	$9,893,999
February	316,920	36.2%	$9,441,332
January	310,430	**35.4%**	$9,218,028

Source: https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/acp-enrollment-and-claims-tracker/

ACP Support Through 11/30:

$118,032,432

Eligible Households:

874,587

Without additional funding from Congress, the FCC anticipates that the current ACP funding is projected to run out in April 2024. This date is an estimate and may change. As a result, the FCC has begun taking steps to wind down the ACP, which means:

- No new ACP enrollments will be accepted after February 7, 2024 at 11:59 PM ET.
- Households that enrolled with an ACP internet company before February 8, 2024 will continue to receive their ACP benefit until ACP funds run out as long as the household remains enrolled and eligible for the benefit.
- When ACP funds run out, households participating in the ACP will no longer receive the ACP discounts.
- ISPs are required to provide notice to recipients

Digital Equity Plan

Covered Populations

- **Low-income individuals**
- **Aging individuals**
- **Racial/ethnic minorities**
- **Rural residents**
- **Veterans**
- **Individuals with disabilities**
- **Individuals with a language barrier**
- **Incarcerated individuals**

Based upon guidance by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), the DOD will focus on assisting several target populations

Goals

Goal 1: Broadband availability and affordability

Objective: Every household and business in South Carolina can subscribe to Broadband service at an affordable rate.

Goal 2: Online accessibility and inclusivity

Objective: Every resident of South Carolina has access to reliable high-speed Broadband service in their homes and businesses.

Goal 3: Digital literacy

Objective: Every resident of South Carolina has access to education and training opportunities necessary to effectively use the internet to advance their personal goals and increase South Carolina's technology workforce competitiveness.

Goal 4: Online privacy and cybersecurity

Objective: Every resident of South Carolina can safely and securely utilize Broadband services.

Goal 5: Device availability and affordability

Objective: Every resident of South Carolina can access a desktop or laptop computer at home or in an accessible location.

Goal 1 Strategies

- Re-purpose the existing South Carolina Broadband Advisory Committee (BBAC) to serve as a combined advisory council for both BEAD and Digital Equity.
- Establish a Digital Equity task force derived from the BBAC comprised of and representing each covered population group and regularly meet with them and partner organizations to assess progress in addressing affordability needs and barriers.
- Continue to prioritize populations in need and approach addressing barriers as implementation progresses and conditions change.
- Partner with non-profits and other organizations to promote utilization of the Affordable Connectivity Program(ACP).
    - Alternatively, explore options to create public and private affordability programs to replace ACP, should the program be discontinued.
- Encourage ISPs to offer low-cost subscription options to qualifying covered populations.
- Coordinate with SCBBO to leverage non-deployment BEAD funds to work with ISPs to promote and encourage public WIFI (ex: Main Street, Columbia) in rural and low-income areas or areas with transient populations.

Goal 2 Strategies

- Create new maps that combine South Carolina Broadband Office coverage data and Covered Population statistics to further prioritize populations and geographies in need.
- Transparently communicate progress, encourage accountability, and community involvement by regularly updating maps, making speed tests available on state website, surveying residents/businesses to confirm services, and staying updated on needs and implementation progress.
- Support BEAD/SCBBO efforts to close broadband service gaps.
- Identify extremely high-cost remote, rural locations and leverage alternate technologies to reach them.
- Coordinate with SCBBO to leverage BEAD infrastructure funds to fully serve HBCUs and the surrounding communities.

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Goal 3 Strategies

- Establish a statewide framework for digital literacy (test or another metric).
- Work with education and non-profit partners to develop Digital Literacy training curriculum with options tailored to prioritized covered populations and provide guidance for integration into public K-12 schools and existing education programs that are underperforming or underserved.
- Support existing public and private training programs – including apprenticeships – that aim to expand the telecommunications and cybersecurity workforce by bolstering digital skills and creating career opportunities.
- Identify Covered Populations and geographic areas with greatest Digital Literacy needs to prioritize for Digital Equity grant program scoring.
- Meet with state agencies and non-profit organizations that offer similar programs and serve covered populations to establish a network of potential implementation partners, share priorities for Digital Equity, and raise awareness of upcoming Digital Equity grant program.
- Create digital training standards for partners and grant recipients to provide services that match established standards.
- Coordinate with SCBBO to leverage non-deployment BEAD funds to promote apprenticeship programs with South Carolina Technical College System and ISPs.

Goal 4 Strategies

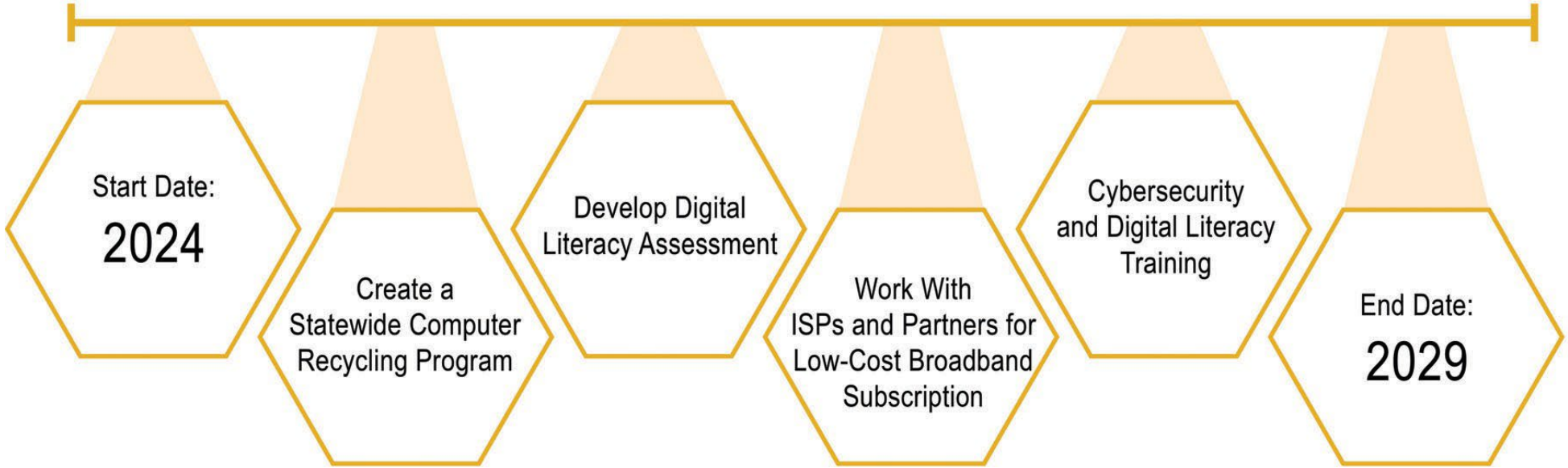
- For underserved school districts, assist with implementation of schoolwide digital safety and awareness standards for K-12 students.
- Invest in a statewide digital safety campaign to ensure that all residents of SC can identify malicious content on their devices.
- Coordinate with the South Carolina Department of Administration's Office of Technology and Information Services, the Division of Information Security (DIS), and community anchor institutions to deliver training to Covered Populations.
- Organize a "Cybersecurity Awareness Week" to focus on internet safety and promote cybersecurity careers.
- Promote online privacy and cybersecurity efforts through SC.GOV, tax notices, DMV, SLED and other notable statewide campaigning.

Goal 5 Strategies

- **Prioritize Digital Equity grant program scoring toward device programs that serve geographies and populations with highest identified needs.**
- Support universal one-to-one programs throughout the complete public K-12 system.
- Partner with organizations to establish a statewide computer recycling network.
- Encourage schools, libraries, and other organizations offering computer labs to consider ways to increase accessibility.
- Work with the Digital Equity task force and non-profits to raise awareness of accessible computer labs and programs to provide devices to households.

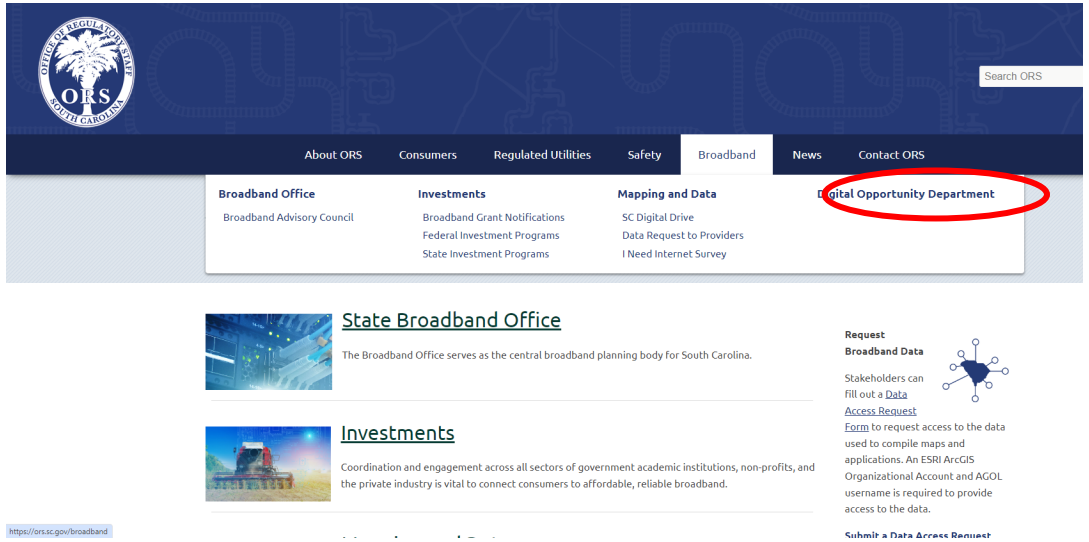
Timeline

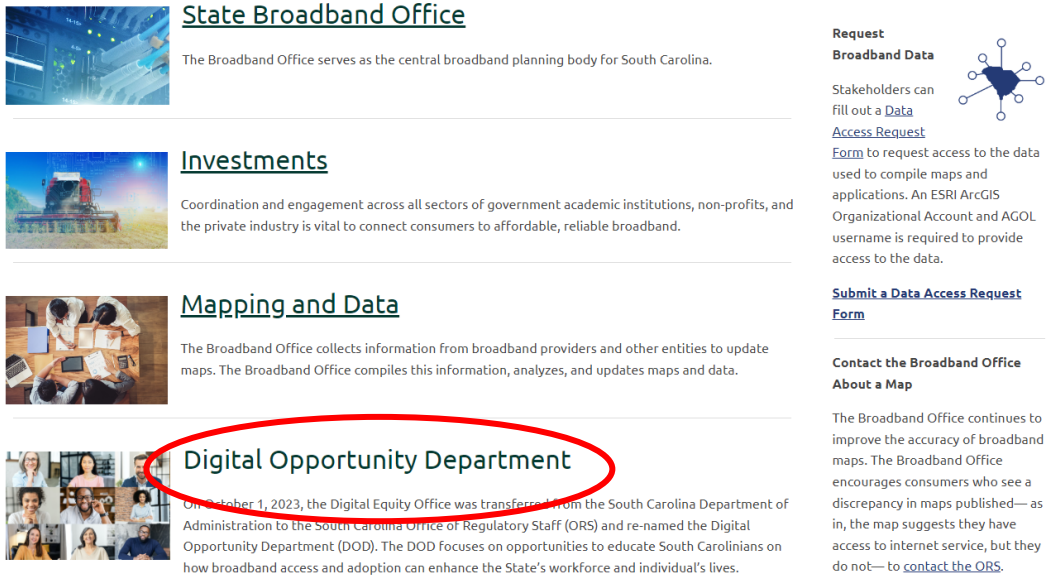
- October 2023 ORS received DOD
- December 2023 Submitted DE Plan for Public Comment
- January 2024 Public Comment period ended
- February 2024 Submit FINAL DE Plan to NTIA



Where can I find more information?

Digital Opportunity Department Website





https://ors.sc.gov/broadband/digitalopportunity

Subscribe to Digital Opportunity Newsletter

Questions?

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