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Broadband Info Session: March 2022 Eligibility Maps Challenges

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – Rev. 8.30.2022

New Questions and/or Revisions Highlighted

Eligibility Map Challenge Process

1. Can we challenge a block that is considered Served? 80% served?
    a. **No. This challenge is for unserved census blocks for this grant, but if you have information that a block should not be considered served, please provide that information, and we will review.**
2. One of the requirements in the challenge process appeared to be for mapping showing plant fiber & line locations. Must this be geocoded data, i.e. in shapefile format or similar? We have Autocad drawings of our plant locations throughout SC but may not have that readily available in a GIS-friendly format for the 6/30 deadline.
    a. **The GIS template shapefiles must be filled out and submitted with all challenges.**
    b. **While certain versions of AutoCAD software will allow one to export data to Shapefile format, it is *highly* recommended to use a GIS-based software platform.**
3. Is there any benefit to showing data from school districts that may not be included in the data you have?
    a. **Student data is provided by the State Department of Education to the ORS for mapping purposes to inform modeling and analytics of eligibility mapping and associated priority areas (i.e. Census Blocks with 20 or more housing units with K-12 students). The ORS will accept additional data provided by ISPs, but the State Department of Education data is the de facto dataset used for the eligibility maps.**
4. Can you have James show the table with the address list? Proposed Served Structure list
    a. **Through the lens of the Challenge Process: The proposed address list must include the addresses one currently serves or intends to serve upon completion of their project for the census blocks being challenged.**
5. Is there a limit to how many census blocks can be challenged on one form?
    a. **There is no limit. The ORS would request the challenges be submitted in geographic clusters.**
6. We currently have several projects in progress "under construction" or "awarded to contractors" in areas that are considered unserved and show up pink or red on the eligibility map. Can we apply for funding on these projects?
    a. **ORS will only reimburse for costs in unserved census blocks incurred after the NTP is issued, under the ARPA SFRF grant program.**

7. We see Census Blocks on the map that are yellow and show they have been funded. However, there are some where we don't believe the provided funding covered all addresses within the Census Block(s). There are some where the majority of the addresses within the "Funded" Census Blocks were outside of the Funded area. Should we challenge these Census Blocks so they could be provided additional funding to cover the remainder of the addresses?
   a. **No. This challenge is for unserved census blocks for this grant, but if you have information, please provide that information, and we will review.**
8. There are Census Blocks on the map that show as "Served" but we believe the majority of the addresses within that Census Block do not have access to 25x3. Should we challenge these blocks so they could be provided additional funding to cover the remainder of the addresses?
   a. **No. This challenge is for unserved census blocks for this grant, but if you have information, please provide that information and we will review.**
9. Do we need to fill out the map challenge form once and list all census blocks, one per serving area/challenged area with multiple census blocks, or one per challenged census block.
   a. **There is no limit. The ORS would request the challenges be submitted in geographic clusters.**
10. Once we have the maps ready using the template provided by ORS does this need to be submitted as a shapefile, pdf, or both?
    a. **Submitted as shapefiles only.**
11. If we have active customers in a challenged area is there any acceptable form of proof that does not require an onsite visit? We could show the active customers current internet package, available packages, etc.
    a. **Billings statements and/or network operations center (NOC) information with customers address will be sufficient.**
12. If we are challenging an area that we are building or plan to build what service ready date is the cut off?
    a. **More information to be provided soon relating to the Funded Project Register (FPR).**
13. In the SC Broadband Eligibility 032022, there are 41,831 entries in the K12ToStud field that have a value of 'YES'. When putting data into the template, it will not accept anything other than a number. How or what should I enter instead?
    a. **The ISP can create a duplicate field in the data and make it a text field. The ORS has also fixed the template GIS and published a new version of it on Citrix and SCdigitaldrive.**
14. I would like to inquire about the Geotagged pictures requirement that the ORS has added to the challenge process and what are some best practices when operationalizing this ask.
    a. **It is recommended ISPs using Geotagged Photographs of speed tests and completed construction follow the steps below to submit their backup documentation as part of the challenge process:**

b. **Confirm location services is enabled on your smart device AND allowed using your device camera - MANDATORY**

c. **For directions to turn on location services on an Apple device visit: https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT207092**

d. **For directions to turn on location services on an Android device visit: https://support.google.com/accounts/answer/3467281?hl=en**

e. **At each completed construction site within the Project Service Areas and associated census blocks outlined in the ISP's challenged area, take pictures of work being conducted and/or evidence that shows work has been completed. An equal distribution of photographs should be taken throughout the Project Service Area. Examples include pedestals, splicing, fiber, fiber cabinets (with doors open), aerial and underground fiber construction and installation (depending on type of construction), NID, etc. Please avoid having people in the photographs.**

f. **Speed tests should be conducted at completed sites. If using a smart device to run the speed test, take a picture of the screen once the speed test is completed. The picture must be geotagged with location information where the speed test was run. When possible, an equal distribution of photographed speed tests should be taken throughout the Project Service Area and associated census blocks being challenged.**

g. **Submit the raw geotagged photos to Citrix under the ISPs Map Challenge Directory. Do not physically attach or embed the photographs (this will drop the latitude/longitude coordinates). Rather, upload the photographs separately as part of the challenge submission process.**

15. There are a number of census blocks that are showing as eligible unserved areas with FUSEDHUs present, but they're actually government owned parcels without anything on them. Our networks are immediately adjacent to them though. How do we address these as challenges if there's no one in the block to serve or show as served? There's no customer data to submit.

   a. **If you don't have infrastructure in that Census block you cannot challenge it. [I think what they are trying to say is - - -there is network but there is no one to serve]**

16. There are some census blocks that clearly aren't residential areas, either marshlands or the middle of a main highway, but they are showing up as high priority areas adjacent to our network. Would you like us to send these to you as fyi's. I think they should probably be included in green served areas or white 'nothing's there' areas.

   a. **Please document these as a challenged area.**

17. In regards to customer data as supporting proof for the eligibility map challenge, what are some examples of NOC information you would accept? If we submitted billing data, would premise address and speed tier suffice? We would likely need to redact all other billing statement info.

   a. **The examples listed above would suffice as long as there is an address tied it.**

18. We would like to request a one-week extension for submitting its challenges to the ARPA Eligibility Map. We believe we may need extra time to put together the mapping data, some of which we did not have readily available at the start of the challenge process. In addition, some

of our key employees on this project have been out of the office or on vacation. Please let us know if such an extension to July 7 would be possible, and if not, if a partial submission would be acceptable (provided that we follow up with the missing elements as soon as possible).

    a. **ORS will not provide an extension to the eligibility map challenge.**

19. Where do we find the "Challenge form"? Is it the from that says "Upload a Broadband Project Form"? If so, do I list the GEOID20 numbers in the comments one for each status I am challenging? Then upload all Shapefiles, PDF signed maps, Pictures, Billing Data, Speed test, etc. to the Citrix Share Folder for our ISP?

    a. **https://ors.sc.gov/broadband/investments/state/arpaslfrf**

Funding Project Registry (FPR) Questions

1. Can you explain how the project registry due Aug 1 will effect any proposed application in a given area?
   a. **Areas where projects have been accepted by the ORS as part of the Funding Project Registry will not be overbuilt with ARPA SFRF funds unless an additional need for broadband is identified or ORS otherwise determines that the public interest requires funding and such funding is in compliance with ARPA rules and guidelines.**

2. When will the results of the FPR (due 8/1) be released?
   a. **The projects submitted under the FPR will not be made public. The data submitted will be kept internally at ORS, and used when applications are selected so areas are not overbuilt.**

General ARPA Grant Program Questions

1. If we want to apply for funding in a pink or red census block that we currently have under construction what would the application look like? Example: A pink census block is 50% built. Would we apply for funding on the remaining 50% or would we apply for the cost of the entire census block. If we only apply for the remaining 50% of the census block it would make the cost per subscriber appear to be much less for that block. Is this a concern?
   a. **Census blocks that are unserved are eligible for funding. Any work done before an official Notice to Proceed has been issued by the ORS cannot be reimbursed. If work has been done in a portion of the unserved census block, make sure that the project area you submit in an application only shows the portion of the census block that remains unserved. Then, document on your application that upon completion, 80% of the census block will be served from a combination of previous work performed and the proposed service area.**
2. Can we see the firms who have submitted an application for the areas we have also applied for (or at least certain metrics they believe they can complete the project with)?
   a. **All eligible applications will be uploaded to the ORS website for comments along with Census blocks included as part of a submission. Certain information for example, financial data, from the application may be redacted.**
3. Do you have a preferred application size? Is one large application or multiple small applications preferred?
   a. **One application should be submitted per project. Size of the application does not matter; key is the ability to complete the project before the completion date presented in the timeline. We encourage you to review the federal requirements associated with ARPA funding as larger projects/$10Million or more may require additional reporting.**
4. I wanted to ask a follow up question regarding overbuild. The presentation stated that eligible projects must not overbuild 25/3, but I was trying to figure out if any portion the area being applied for can be "served" or must the entire area being applied for be defined as unserved? I thought I heard mention of possibly having to cross served areas in order to get to unserved areas. Stated a different way, looking at the South Carolina Eligibility map you presented, can any portion of the "green" area be included in a funding request application if it also encompasses the "red"? If you can answer that and maybe give an example, if needed, that would be great.
   a. **Only areas that are unserved according to the March 2022 eligibility map will be available for funding. If you must build through a green area to reach the "red" please explain in your application and we will consider the application but we will not pay for drops or connections within a served area.**
5. Will you address cybersecurity in this grant

       a. **Cybersecurity is an ineligible expense for this SFRF ARPA grant.**
6. Will projects that include a priority area(s) as well census blocks that have customer locations above 25/3 be eligible for funding?
       a. **Only areas that are unserved according to the March 2022 eligibility map will be available for funding.**
7. When you say don't overbuild existing 25/3 networks does that include DSL?
       a. **All areas that have DSL as the only service available in a 2020 Census Block are unserved.**
8. Define affordable?
       a. **Treasury's guidance provides flexibility for recipients of funds to best determine the threshold of affordability for their communities. ISPs are encouraged to consult with the community as part of the process they undertake to consider affordability and are required to publish the description of their methods for considering affordability in their project selection process. Treasury will also require pricing data as part of program performance and monitoring. ISPs must participate in the Federal Communications Commission's Affordable Connectivity Program, which provides eligible households with discounts on broadband internet access services and devices.**
9. Is this Webex Meeting being recorded for follow-up review at a later date
       a. **The meeting was not recorded. The slide deck of the presentation and FAQ will be posted on the ORS SFRF ARPA page.**
10. Can you define "Affordable" for the ACP?
       a. **Treasury's guidance provides flexibility for recipients of funds to best determine the threshold of affordability for their communities. ISPs are encouraged to consult with the community as part of the process they undertake to consider affordability and are required to publish the description of their methods for considering affordability in their project selection process. Treasury will also require pricing data as part of program performance and monitoring. ISPs must participate in the Federal Communications Commission's Affordable Connectivity Program, which provides eligible households with discounts on broadband internet access services and devices.**
11. In the Project eligibility criteria section item 2 states "Applicant must serve a minimum of 80% of the housing units in the entire census block(s) outlined in their grant application upon completion of the project." But in the Universal Service Broadband Requirement section it states " Upon approval of a project under this grant program, <u>all residents and businesses in the Project Service Area must be served</u> in a manner that is non-discriminatory, at speeds equal to or greater than the minimum required in these Guidelines, and without additional construction or startup costs to the customer." One seems to address where service is extended, and the other the manner in which it is extended to the locations being built. But for clarity, is the minimum level of service availability in the targeted census block 80% or 100%?
       a. **80% of an unserved Census Block, 100% of a Project Service Area within an unserved Census Block, and 100% of a Priority Census Block.**

12. When conditions beyond the control of the grantee cause delays in project completion, will the program consider extensions to the project deadline?
    a. **The ARPA SFRF Grant Program timeline includes two years for construction completion. No information regarding an extension can be provided at this time. The ORS recommends ISPs consider shrinking their project to fit a two-year construction window.**
13. I know we can define our own match for the ARPA applications, but is there a minimum match requirement? Could there be a scenario where ORS awards a 100% grant funded project?
    a. **We strongly encourage the ISP to provide a match.**

> 5. **10% Average Cost Per Structure Served**
> - Lowest average cost – **10 points**
> - Higher costs per structure receive lower points
> - Lower SFRF match request receives higher points

14. Could iPads needed to run and document speed tests for the new required reporting be considered an eligible cost under ARPA, under the Validation of Service expenses category?
    a. **Software or hardware used to run and document speed tests are not an eligible expense.**
15. Do we need to serve 100% of the housing units in a priority area or 80% of the housing units in a priority area?
    a. **Within your proposed project area, an ISP needs to serve 100% of the housing units in priority census blocks and 80% or more of the housing units in unserved census blocks.**
16. If we already have construction projects that are well underway and in some cases completed in underserved areas (red/pink) on the map, is there a way we can apply for a grant for these areas?
    a. **Completed projects are not eligible for funding under this grant. ORS is reviewing H.4408 and a future grant opportunity may be available.**
17. If we plan on applying in multiple counties with the same legal entity, do we need to do a separate application for each county?
    a. **A separate application is required for each project. If the project crosses county lines, but is large and contiguous, one application is fine.**
18. Will there be disbursement of grant funds at milestones throughout the project (25%, 50%, 75%), or will project need to be 100% complete and paid for before any grant funds are disbursed?
    a. **Currently, there no milestones for funds disbursement. The project needs to be 100% complete to receive funding from ORS.**
19. Is there a Word version of the ARPA affidavit listed in the guidelines?
    a. **Yes. We have posted a Word version of the ARPA affidavit on our website under "ARPA SFRF Program Documents."**
20. What does ORS consider a project? We would like to do this by geographic locations i.e. Town of Elloree, Town of Cameron, Town of Holly Hill, etc. Or do you need it by county, the outlying

areas we usually do projects by our electric feeds one "Hut", which houses our optics and equipment for that service area, that may cross counties and towns.

    a. **A separate application is required for each project. Each project needs to contain at least one priority area census block. If a project crosses county lines, but is large and contiguous, one application is fine.**

21. Factoring lead times and supply chain issues, if orders need to be placed before NTP in order to get materials and supplies on time, can they still be used as part of the grant?

    a. **Yes, upon project completion ORS will reimburse awarded projects for materials and supplies in their inventory purchased prior to NTP. Reimbursement will be based on the actual cost incurred and NOT the market value at the time of final payment. No reimbursement will occur by ORS if the ISP is not awarded a grant.**

22. If a community representative has given median income but has no data for affordability of a household... Is there a formula we should use to come up with an affordable plan? We have competitive rates for the area.

    a. **(This was a response from the FAQs that ORS previously provided): Treasury's guidance provides flexibility for recipients of funds to best determine the threshold of affordability for their communities. ISPs are encouraged to consult with the community as part of the process they undertake to consider affordability and are required to publish the description of their methods for considering affordability in their project selection process. Treasury will also require pricing data as part of program performance and monitoring. ISPs must participate in the Federal Communications Commission's Affordable Connectivity Program, which provides eligible households with discounts on broadband internet access services and devices.**

23. In construction, we assume all residents and businesses will be customers..however, once a project is complete will payment be issued on actual connectivity or access?

    a. **Payment will be issued based on access, as outlined in an ISPs grant agreement.**

24. The program Guidelines do not mention a bonding requirement, but Section 6 of the Application (Attachment Checklist) includes "Certificates of Bonding, as described in CFR § 200.326 Bonding requirements." Section 200.326, however, falls under Subpart D, "***Post*** Federal Award Requirements" (emphasis added). Obtaining performance and payment bonds for unawarded projects is costly. Is a bid bond sufficient at the application stage of the process, leaving any additional bonding requirements to be met at the grant agreement stage? In the alternative, would ORS accept a certified letter from a surety company that confirms the applicant's current, unencumbered bonding capacity and history of performance under prior bonds?

    a. **Applicants must comply with the Guidelines and all regulatory requirements, including those prescribed in CFR § 200.326. Unless the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity has made the determination that Federal interest is adequately protected, the minimum requirements must be met.** ~~**In part the minimum requirements include each bidder obtaining a bid guarantee equal to five percent of the bid price.**~~

25. Per bonding requirements in CFR § 200.326 when must we secure a bond for this project? Is a bond required for every sub-contract that we have?
    a. ~~Applicants must comply with the Guidelines and all regulatory requirements, including those prescribed in CFR § 200.326. Unless the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity has made the determination that Federal interest is adequately protected, the minimum requirements must be met. In part the minimum requirements include each bidder obtaining a bid guarantee equal to five percent of the bid price. A bond is not required for every sub-contract.~~
    b. **A performance bond is not required during application submission. ORS will require a performance bond during the contracting process, after execution of a grant agreement, but prior to issuance of a Notice to Proceed. ISPs should indicate either yes or no as to whether they will be able to secure a bond, if awarded a grant.**
26. We require subcontractors to carry adequate insurance. Is this acceptable in place of a bond?
    a. **Yes. Each grant recipient is required to be insured and it's the grant recipients' responsibility to ensure their sub-contractors are properly insured. ORS does not require Bonding for sub-contractors.**
27. If we demonstrate adequate financial resources, must we secure a bond from our contactors and subcontractors?
    a. **No.**
28. Some areas marked as priority areas are designated as such because either there are not any technology options there today or it has been designated as a difficult development area. If we include a priority area that has been designated as a priority area because there are currently no technology options or it is a difficult development area and there is no indication of the presence of K-12 students, will that priority area still meet the criteria required for an eligible project?
    a. **Yes, the requirements for a project are a minimum of one priority area census block.**
29. Under eligible criteria 13 Eligible costs include, but not limited to: Under C. Architect and engineering services, subject to ORS approval.   Can you please clarify what you mean by subject to ORS approval? or Maybe a better question would be what Architect and engineering services associated with our proposed design would NOT be covered?
    a. **Architect and engineering expenses that the ORS considers an eligible cost would be related to construction design for the project outlined in an ISPs grant application only.**
30. Why can't you make this new eligibility selection as a new dataset that is available without us all having to do?
    a. **The ORS did not want to create a second eligibility map to avoid confusion on which map/data to use when applying for a grant.**
31. What if our coverage map only covers part of one of the census blocks do we still select the entire census block?
    a. **Service areas do not have to cover the entire census block. Only select a census block for funding if it meets the following requirements: Priority Area Census blocks must be**

able to serve 100% of the housing units at project completion and an Unserved Census block must be able to serve at least 80% of the housing units at project completion. ISPs must be able to serve 100% of the serviceable locations in a project Service Area at project completion.

32. If we submit by august 31 and the app is kicked back. Will we have the opportunity to correct the issues.
    a. **The ORS will work with applicants to correct minor errors in the application and/or GIS data.**

33. When you say homes, what about Multi dwelling units, mixed use, small businesses, multi tenant, etc?
    a. **This is referring to the proposed structures served file located in the template GIS Data. The ORS would like all addresses and multiple points for a multi-unit dwelling. List these as home in the type field found within the attribute table of this particular data layer.**

34. Do the priority eligibility areas marked on the Eligibility Map already take into account the existence of qualifying K-12 students, DDA status, etc., or do we need to look at the priority census blocks and then run that analysis ourselves?
    a. **All priority area census blocks listed in the eligibility map meet one or more of the following criteria. 20 or more K-12 students and/or HUD Difficult Development Area and/or No ISP.**

35. We understand that we must serve at least one Priority Census Block, and we must serve 100% of the households in that CB. What if an application includes several priority CBs? Do we need to serve 100% of households in at least one, or 100% in each priority CB?
    a. **You need to serve 100% housing units in all the priority census blocks listed in your application.**

36. Could the FCC fabric points be used for business and residential data?
    a. **It's up to the ISP to determine the data set or source of the data used.**

37. What are your suggestions to separate the projects? i.e. County, electric feeder, substation or just towns?
    a. **It's up to the ISP on how they want to separate projects. When separating a project, an ISP is reminded that each project needs to contain at least one priority area census block.**

38. What line data is required on app, many of the items in the data set are subject to change during permit approval, this data could be provided on as-built data provided
    a. **Proposed line is required for a grant submission. The ORS understands the proposed line work might change from the final build.**

39. For fixed wireless what lines would you expect?
    a. **Please submit the coverage area for fixed wireless.**

40. Regarding differences between planning and the final as-builts, in other words, as long as we serve the CBs and homes we said we would, variations in the exact locations of the fiber/coax are acceptable?
    a. **The ORS understands the proposed line work might change from the final build.**
41. Are there environmental requirements?
    a. **Yes. See ARPA SLFRF draft grant agreement located on the ORS' website.**
42. Will Davis Bacon be a requirement?
    a. **See ARPA SLFRF draft grant agreement located on the ORS' website.**
43. Will the auditing process involve any third parties that may need to be hired, or will it strictly be between us and the ORS?
    a. **The ORS is evaluating all possibilities.**
44. If we have an area that has several priority Unserved but is interwoven with served areas how will the maps work?
    a. **It is acceptable to submit an application with one project that contains multiple priority areas that are not contiguous. The ORS acknowledges instances may occur where fiber or cable must pass through a served census block to connect an unserved and/or priority census block. However, the ISP is prohibited from connecting homes in served areas with ARPA SLFRF funding from the ORS.**
45. What was the 400+ page document referenced on the 8/11/2022 GIS training and where can it be found?
    a. **ARPA Final Rule documentation. See Exhibit I of the draft ARPA SLFRF grant agreement for additional details.**
46. We currently offer a fiber broadband option with symmetrical speeds of 100Mbps/100Mbps. The price point for this offering is currently $49.94. My question is can we apply the ACP discount to this offering price in order to comply with the low cost option or does the starting price point need to be less than $34.99?
    a. **Treasury's guidance provides flexibility for recipients of funds to best determine the threshold of affordability for their communities. ISPs are encouraged to consult with the community as part of the process they undertake to consider affordability and are required to publish the description of their methods for considering affordability in their project selection process. Treasury will also require pricing data as part of program performance and monitoring. ISPs must participate in the Federal Communications Commission's Affordable Connectivity Program, which provides eligible households with discounts on broadband internet access services and devices.**
47. Do we have to provide a Bonding certificate per project or can it be per entity?
    a. **A bonding certificate per project. Applicants must comply with the Guidelines and all regulatory requirements, including those prescribed in CFR § 200.326. Unless the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity has made the determination that Federal interest is adequately protected, the minimum requirements must be met. In**

part, the minimum requirements include each bidder obtaining a bid guarantee equal to five percent of the bid price.

48. Concerning disbursement of funds: Completing the mainline portion of a project may only take a few months, but we will likely continue to incur expenses to add new customers in a project area all the way up to the 12/31/24 deadline. Once we request and receive reimbursement for the mainline portion of the project, will we be allowed to request additional funds at a later date to cover these incremental expenses for continuing to add new customers (assuming the costs for these additional service installs was accounted for in the approved application amount)?
    a. **Drop-related expenses, excluding CPE (customer premise equipment), are eligible for reimbursement; however, drops must be included in your application and budgeted. Construction must be complete within the project timeline. Disbursement of funds does not occur until the whole project is complete, and all required materials have been submitted and approved.**

49. The engineering timeline/proposed design does it have to be a PE or are we following same guidelines where the Network Engineer with 7 years-experience will work in lieu of the PE for now?
    a. **ORS does not require a Professional Engineer to certify the grant timeline or proposed design.**

50. The application guideline document includes an "Attachment 3 : 2020 Census Blocks Proposed for Funding Example"; however, this attachment is not listed as a required document in Section 6 of the application. Since all the census block data will be part of the GIS shapefiles, is this 'Attachment 3' document required as part of the application?
    a. **No. The ORS will generate Attachment 3 for all applications that are selected for funding. It will be included in the grant agreement as Exhibit M.**

51. Is the number needed the SCEIS number or is it the SC State ID number with SCDOR?
    a. **SCEIS Vendor Number. All ISPs awarded a grant must obtain a SCEIS Vendor Number prior to NTP. If you wish to begin the process of obtaining a SCEIS Vendor Number, the link to vendor registration is available here: https://procurement.sc.gov/doing-biz/registration**

52. Internally we are trying to specifically determine whether ORS is going to award grants in areas where RDOF funds have been awarded already. Can you please provide guidance on this?
    a. **ORS reserves the right to award grants in areas where federal funds have been awarded when there is an identified need for additional broadband infrastructure investment that is not met by existing federal or state funding commitments.**

53. Is it required to upload and have bonding document uploaded with the application package?
    a. **No. A performance bond is not required during application submission. The ORS will require a performance bond during the contracting process, after execution of a grant agreement, but prior to issuance of a Notice to Proceed. ISPs should indicate either yes or no as to whether they will be able to secure a bond, if awarded a grant.**

54. There is no category in Section 2.1 of the application for 'electronics' or 'network equipment'. Should we include these costs in the 'other' category?
    a. **If the anticipated expenses do not fit in any other category, use the 'other' category**
55. In the broadband pricing section of the application we do offer a low cost option of 30Mbps x 5 Mbps with a price of $XX.XX. However, in the draft application it says: "include at least one low-cost option without data usage caps AND at speeds of 100Mbps/20Mbps." We also offer a 100Mbps/100Mbps fiber option with a price of $XX.XX. Will our application be rejected because our lowest low-cost option does fall within the affordable price range, but does not have a speed offering of 100Mbps/20Mbps?
    a. **No. In the example provided, this alone would not reject an application from consideration. To determine an affordable plan option, Treasury's guidance provides flexibility for recipients of funds to best determine the threshold of affordability for their communities. ISPs are encouraged to consult with the community as part of the process they undertake to consider affordability and are required to publish the description of their methods for considering affordability in their project selection process. ORS does require an affordable plan that includes a minimum speed threshold of 100/20 Mbps up/down.**
56. Define drop-related construction and what needs to be completed before payment is issued
    a. **Fiber and/or cable to the premise which must be operational and documented. Please see ARPA SLFRF guidelines (page 15) for reporting requirements.**
57. Are speed tests required before payment is issued?
    a. **Please see page 15 of the ARPA SLFRF guidelines for reporting requirements.**
58. Are you wanting drop connections to the street/curb or the structure?
    a. **Drop connections must go to the premise and be fully operational.**
59. Can you use the drop to the structure from the curb as a part of the match?
    a. **No.**
60. Understanding that all residents and/or businesses will have access, however are we to assume that every structure will want connectivity.
    a. **Each ISP is responsible for determining their own take rate and/or business case.**
61. We are designing a project for the SC ARPA SFRF broadband program in areas that are adjacent to our current service footprint. Based on our experiences serving these communities, we have developed an understanding of what an affordable entry-level fiber product in this communities would be. However, the plan does not fit into the proposed broadband pricing tiers on the application, which cap out at $35. Should we treat this $35 figure as the standard against which a service offering is compared to determine if it qualifies as affordable under the program?
    a. **See Response to FAQ 16. If a package is not offered in a pricing tier listed, please select "No" from the drop-down list provided in the grant application for each tier and attach pricing tiers to the application as a separate upload into ORS' Citrix FileShare. As a reminder, ACP should not be factored into any of the pricing tiers listed in the grant application. Applicants are also reminded per ARPA regulations, an affordable**

plan is required and ISPs are required to publish the description of their methods for considering affordability in their project selection process. ORS does require an affordable plan that includes a minimum speed threshold of 100/20 Mbps up/down, with no data limits.

62. The latest FAQ about drop related construction has created some confusion on the requirements of a completed project. Just for clarification, are we only required to complete drops to a premise requesting service? and please confirm there are no requirements to install drops to a premise that is not requesting service?

    a. **An ISP is only required to install drops to a premise that has requested service. But, all premises in the project service area must have access to service upon project completion.**

63. Example: Our project will provide access to 100% of the homes and businesses in all census blocks where we are requesting funding. However, drops to the premise will only be performed to a premise that request service. Our interpretation from previous FAQ's and the Grant Agreement is that reimbursement is based on access not connectivity. (Connectivity defined as actually installing a premise) See answer to question 23.

    a. **Payment will be issued upon project completion. Project completion is based upon 100% access in the project service area. Payment will be remitted once. To include eligible drop expenses (that were budgeted on the original application), the drops must have occurred prior to the ISP's invoice submittal and the project completion date listed in the timeline.**

64. Our construction timeline is estimated to be completed by 4/23 for access to homes and businesses in all proposed census blocks. At this time our project will be considered complete. Question 32 of the FAQ states : "All drop-related construction must be completed within the overall project timeline." Our interpretation of this answer is that all drop related construction prior to 4/23 will be eligible for reimbursement and all drop related construction after 4/23 will be the responsibility of the provider. Is this a correct statement? Or is there a requirement to close the project on 12/24?

    a. **Each ISP can choose a completion date that makes sense for their individual project(s). No additional expenses will be accepted after the ISP submits their invoice for payment. All projects must be completed NLT 12/31/2024.**

65. If our project is completed before 12/24, will reimbursement be paid upon project completion or after the 12/31/24 date?

    a. **Reimbursement will be made upon project completion and submittal of all required information, reviewed and approved by the ORS. Refer to the Draft Grant Agreement, Section 3, Item D. Disbursement of the Grant.**

66. Federal Regulation 2 CFR § 200.326 is included in Title 2, Part 200, Subpart D of the Federal Regulations, which is entitled "Post Federal Award Requirements." ORS has clarified that the performance bonds referenced in the regulation will not be required at the application submission stage, consistent with the regulation. However, the guidance in the FAQs on bid

guarantees (which is also included in Reg. 200.326) is confusing. Can you please clarify that the bid guarantee likewise is not required at the application submission stage? We believe that is consistent with the intent of the regulation to apply post-award. Also, the regulation by its express terms applies to "construction or facility improvement contracts" (as opposed to applications). Please clarify.

   a. **A bid guarantee is not required.**

ARPA Application Questions

1. If we have started a project "self-funded" in pink census blocks but know it will not be finished by June 2023, can we apply for funding of those census blocks?
   a. **The ORS will only reimburse for costs in unserved census blocks incurred after the NTP is issued, under the ARAP SFRF grant program.**
2. Where would a ProjectID come from?
   a. **Ignore this field for the map challenge, it is a field used for a grant application.**
3. Is there a full exemplary application?
   a. **No**
4. Will this presentation be shared with attendees? Also, is this meeting/presentation being recorded for future playback by attendees?
   a. **The meeting was not recorded. The slide deck of the presentation and FAQ will be posted on the ORS SFRF ARPA page.**
5. If a necessary part of a broadband network must be built through a funded or served area to make services available to a priority or unserved block, does that work also qualify for funding?
   a. **Costs to build through a served area to get to an unserved are considered an eligible expense. However, drops to homes, business and the like within a served area is not an eligible expense.**
6. Does every project have to have at least one block that has 20+ K-12 students in it, or does it have to have at least one block that has any K-12 students in it?
   a. **Every project must have at least one (1) priority census block included.**
7. Relative to section 4.1 of the application, can you confirm that the project narrative you are looking for is a high-level description of the infrastructure (i.e. FTTP, Fixed wireless, etc) planned by the applicant?
   a. **The project narrative is to be a well thought out description of your project. As examples, you should detail items such as the type of technology being deployed and include the communities that will be served at the completion of the project. In addition, you should describe why the area you are applying for is in need of broadband and your plans for community engagement.**
8. Is it acceptable to manipulate the excel document to add comments in Section 1 and Section 2? Example: In Section 1 could Column C be used for comments or in section 1.5, if the answer is "No" is it still acceptable to add comments below the answer?
   a. **No additional comments can be added to another column in the spreadsheet. No modifications to the application are to be made.**
9. As a follow up to the question about manipulating the spreadsheet, are we able to attach additional documents to the application instead of manipulating the spreadsheet?
   a. **Yes, attaching additional documentation is fine.**
10. We don't offer any packages within the 5 price tiers listed. What is the appropriate response? Does ACP factor into this at all?

      a. **If a package is not offered in a pricing tier listed, please put N/A. ACP is not factored into any of the pricing tiers listed. As a reminder, per ARPA regulations, an affordable plan is required.**

11. As part of the grant application (Project Cost Section 2.1)... are we to include the CPE in the cost? If so, does it need to be listed separately?
      a. **Customer Premise Equipment (CPE) is not an eligible expense.**

12. We have multiple offices in different states...when it comes to the Sales Tax, are looking for an average, lump sum, or use South Carolina
      a. **Sales tax expense should be what you anticipate your actual sales tax expense will be, regardless of state.**

13. In regards to the Payroll... are we to estimate what is dedicated to this project only?
      a. **Estimated payroll expenses should include those directly working on the construction of the project.**

14. Do we need to submit a Grant Application and Budget summary and an Affidavit for each project or is it one per ISP entity and we list all projects under Section 1.2?
      a. **A separate application, budget summary, and affidavit are required for each project.**

15. For each letter of support that we receive, do we need to list the contact information for that individual and entity on the project sponsors tab within the application? I am seeing only 4 of these project sponsors are available in this tab.
      a. **Include project sponsors in the application based on priority and/or level of involvement. Additional project sponsors, (including letters of support), should be sent as separate attachments.**

16. The US Treasury encourages recipients to consult with the community on the general affordability needs of the target markets in the proposed service area. If an applicant does not offer broadband service at the specific pricing tiers listed in the application, what other information will ORS accept as evidence that the applicant will provide an affordable pricing option to the target market?
      a. **In the event an ISP does not provide broadband service at the tiers listed in the grant application, the ISP should select "No" for each tier listed in the grant application, and provide additional attachments including their pricing tiers. Applicants are reminded ARPA requires ISPs to participate in ACP, in addition to providing a low-cost affordable plan with no income requirement.**

17. The ARPA SFRF Guidelines (p. 5) and response to Question 15 of the "General ARPA Grant Program Questions" state that an applicant must "serve" a minimum of 100% of the housing units in priority census block(s) and 80% or more of the housing units in unserved census block(s) outlined in their grant applications upon completion of the project. We understand the term "serve" in this context to mean providing access to service, i.e., upon completion of the project, the applicant must be able to provide service to (100%/80% of) those housing units within a reasonable amount of time after a request for service is received. Can you please confirm or clarify?

a. **Served – A residence or business is considered served if standard broadband service at reliable speeds of 25/3 megabits per second ("Mbps") download/upload is available to the residence or business at no additional charge for aid in construction cost. If the broadband customer is asked or required to bear the additional costs to construct a drop or line to the residence or business to obtain broadband service at reliable speeds of 25/3 Mbps download/upload, then the structure is considered unserved.**

18. If a red priority block has less than 20 k-12 students can you receive points? What if a red block has less than 20 students?

    a. **Yes, see selection criteria in the ARPA SLFRF Guidelines document for ranking details. Applicants are reminded a priority area can meet one or more of the following criteria: 20 or more K-12 students and/or No ISP and/or HUD Difficult Development Area. The minimum requirement is at least one priority area per project, applicants are encouraged to include as many priority areas as possible which will increase the overall application ranking.**

19. Define Project Sponsor vs. getting a letter of support

    a. **We are looking for letters of support from project sponsors. Project sponsors may provide both financial as well as non-financial support.**

20. In Section 1.2 of the Application, does the applicant self-select a Project Number or is there any guidance regarding how the Project number should be identified?

    a. **Per the Application Guidelines: Project Name/Number - Provide a project name and number, the number should be formatted as such XXX-XX, with the first three digits alphabetical and the last two numerical. The ORS recommends the first three alphabetical digits relate to your Company name.**

21. In Section 1.6 of the Application, there are timelines requested for when installations begin and when installations end. Does this refer to actual installation of a customer's service? Alternatively, would it refer to activities associated with ensuring there are connection points along the cable routes for connecting each premises? or is there an expectation that drop wires and ONT's will need to be placed before the project can be considered complete? If the latter, how would the grant program accommodate a business plan that only installs dropwires/ONTs upon a customer's actual request for service?

    a. **The timeline for when installations begins, refers to when service is available for the consumer to be connected to an ISPs network.**

22. In Section 1.7 of the Application, the last line item asks "Does the applicant plan to serve every structure in the proposed project service area?" and, "If no, provide an explanation for why the Project will not Pass all Homes in the proposed project service area." Does this line item relate only to situations where the applicant is not proposing to serve 100% of homes (and businesses and other public facilities) in every census block that is included as part of the proposed project? Or would there be other scenarios where a location within the project service area might not be served (or passed)?

     a. **All serviceable structures within a project service area must be able to be served at the completion of the project.**

23. In Section 3.1 of the Application, one of the line items asks for confirmation that the applicant will not procure telecommunications equipment or services from China. Would you clarify what would constitute equipment or services procured from China? For instance, does this statement relate to the source of the completely assembled piece of equipment? If the equipment manufactured uses certain components that are sourced from China but the manufacturer itself is not Chinese, the majority of components are not Chinese, and the assembly of the equipment is not performed in China – would the application reasonably be able to state that the equipment was not from China? Also, does this line item refer to just to major pieces of network equipment or does it refer to each and every single component of the network, no matter how small?

     a. **ISPs are prohibited from using Grant funds to procure or obtain certain telecommunications and video surveillance services or equipment. For additional details, refer to the Code of Federal Regulations 2 CFR 200.216 and 2 CFR 200.471.**

24. In Section 4.1 of the Application, one of the line items asks if the project will prioritize fiber deployment, participate in the ACP, "and (3) prioritize support for local networks owned, operated, or affiliated with local governments, nonprofits, and cooperatives." Would you provide guidance regarding how an applicant's project could prioritize support for local networks owned, operated, or affiliated with local governments, nonprofits, and cooperatives? If a project does not prioritize such support, how would that impact the Application Selection ranking of the project?

     a. **Language from this section of the grant application were sourced from the ARPA final rule, page 295. The provision outlined herein is encouraged, but not a requirement. See selection criteria for details pertaining to how the ORS will rank grant applications.**

25. In Section 6.1 of the Application, it suggests that that Certificates of Bonding for the project would be attached to the Application. Are applicants expected to obtain certificates of bonding for "five percent of the bid price" or some other percentage of the project prior submitting a grant application? Or is it sufficient for an applicant to certify that it will obtain necessary certificates of bonding upon notice of a grant award (and prior to execution of a grant award contract/agreement)?

     a. **Applicants must comply with the Guidelines and all regulatory requirements, including those prescribed in CFR § 200.326. Unless the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity has made the determination that Federal interest is adequately protected, the minimum requirements must be met. In part the minimum requirements include each bidder obtaining a bid guarantee equal to five percent of the bid price. In accordance with CFR § 200.326, applicants are expected to obtain certificates of bonding for five percent of the bid price at the time of application submission to the ORS.**

26. You said one Priority area per application, is that at least one or can we only have one per application. Do we have to do an application per project and an affidavit per project?

a. **ISPs need a minimum of one priority area census block per project. A project should be one contagious area with priority area census blocks and unserved census blocks included. Applicants can have as many priority census blocks in their application as they choose. See selection criteria in the ARPA Guidelines for details related to ranking and scoring priority areas.**

27. I believe it was said earlier, you want us to provide our own housing count in the TotHouse field -- so we are to copy the census block level data from the Eligibility Map, but overwrite that field alone?

a. **The ORS would prefer and ISP to use their housing unit count for a census block, not the census housing unit count that the ORS provides.**

28. Section 1.7 of the application requests the "Total Number of unserved 2020 Census Blocks part of Proposed Project". Please clarify if this number should be the total of 'PRIORITY' plus 'UNSERVED' census blocks.

a. **It should be the total number of census blocks the applicant is applying for (Priority Areas + Unserved).**

29. Section 4 Additional Info of the Grant Application and Budget Summary requires a list of documents that demonstrate your organization currently has the necessary funds to complete this project/proposal. What are some examples of documents that would be acceptable?

a. **Without being exhaustive, Current Bank/Financial Statements, Letters of Credit, and any other evidence of financial support to be considered by the ORS on a case-by-case basis.**

30. Application Section 1.7 requests "Average Cost Per Structure Served". Should this be the ISP portion of the average cost, the ORS portion of the average cost, or the sum of both?

a. **The average cost per structure should be the average of the total cost (ORS Portion + ISP Portion).**

31. In regards to the application scoring criteria outlined in the guidelines, 60% of the score is based on items 1, 2, and 4. In a hypothetical situation, assume 2 different ISPs apply for the exact the same blocks. ISP #1 combines them all into one application. ISP #2 separates them into 5 different applications. Based on the items 1, 2, and 4, ISP #1 application would score much higher than ISP #2 on their applications because their single application has more blocks, has more units served, and covers a larger total land area. Even if ISP #2 has a lower cost per location served, it would still score much lower since cost is only 10% and these other criteria are 60%. Is this a correct assumption and interpretation of the how the applications will be scored? This would have a significant impact on how applicants size their projects. In this example, it seems ISP #2 would clearly be the better choice, but their 5 applications would not score as well as the 1 application from ISP #1.

a. **This would be decision for the ISP to make on how they want to submit an application(s). The ranking criteria is shown in the ARPA guidelines.**

32. We have a few questions on what qualifies as eligible expenses. Are the below items covered as eligible expenses under ARPA? **1)**Premise installation services **2)**Optical Network Terminals -

ONTs **3)**Central Office FTTx access equipment (Optical Line Terminals - OLTs and associated equipment) **4)**Can you clarify what type of CPEs are and are not included as an eligible expense **5)**If we have to purchase land and build buildings for network offices to service this project areas, and if that will be the only purpose of those properties, is this an eligible expense?

    a. **ONT's which are attached to a structure, and OLT's that are necessary to build the proposed network segment are both considered eligible expenses, everything else in the bulleted list is <u>NOT</u> considered an eligible expense. For purposes of the ARPA SLFRF grant program, expenses incurred for main-line construction - including the drop connections to the structure - are considered eligible expenses as long as they are included in the application and properly budgeted. All drop-related construction must be completed within the overall project timeline. Expenses related to the purchase or construction of towers, land, buildings, building renovations, tower upgrades, or the acquisition of facilities or companies are <u>NOT</u> considered eligible expenses.**

33. Sec 3; Row 9 of the Application asks the applicant to confirm that the "Project will comply with the requirements set forth in ARPA, South Carolina Act No. _____ of 2022, and other federal, state, and local laws, including environmental and permitting laws and regulations." Can you specify with which South Carolina Act an applicant's project must comply?

    a. **H.4408 became Act 244 on July 25, 2022. Act 244 is the state law which governs compliance.**

34. We will be using all contract labor to complete our proposed project. Do we need to get the information from our contractors to complete Section 2?

    a. **An ISP needs to include in their budget all eligible costs related to the project, whether internal or external.**

35. The SC grant application asks for the "Total Number of Census Blocks with Concentrations of K-12" in the proposed project. Does this refer to any census block that the state map identifies as having unserved k-12 students, or does it only refer to census blocks that have been identified as having at least a specific number of k-12 students identified (5 or above? 20 or above?)?

    a. **This is referring to the total number of census blocks in your project area that contain K-12 students.**

36. This question was not fully answered, Can you please answer the highlighted question? [In Section 1.6 of the Application, there are timelines requested for when installations begin and when installations end. Does this refer to actual installation of a customer's service? Alternatively, would it refer to activities associated with ensuring there are connection points along the cable routes for connecting each premises? or is there an expectation that drop wires and ONT's will need to be placed before the project can be considered complete? If the latter, how would the grant program accommodate a business plan that only installs dropwires/ONTs upon a customer's actual request for service? a. The timeline for when installations begins, refers to when service is available for the consumer to be connected to an ISPs network.]

      a. **Reimbursement is based on the eligible expenses incurred during the grant period. Reimbursement is based on 100% access in project service areas and connecting as many locations as possible during the period of performance.**

37. Do you want both residential and business rates uploaded or residential only?

      a. **ORS requires residential rates only.**

38. With development in the region and rental properties in the Census blocks should never end, Can we put the word Indefinite in the block?

      a. **No. ORS requires the number of structures at the time of application submission.**

39. We normally do not open up the project for installation until the whole project is completed due to light testing and splicing, we do this to insure the consumer receives a more reliable service from day one of their install. So is it acceptable to put upon project completion or 12/31/2024 in the block? Or does it have to be before 12/31/2024?

      a. **All project construction must be completed prior to 12/31/2024.**

40. Can any officer of the company sign the application, or does it have to be the President, CEO, or CFO?

      a. **It must be the President, CEO, or CFO.**

41. Are the Certificates of Insurance mentioned in row 21 of the attachment checklist (Section 6) required at the time of the application? Or are they required only during the contracting process (analogously to the bonding requirements)? If they are required at the time of the application, what's the amount required?

      a. **Current insurance documents must be submitted at the time of application submission. However, ORS at its sole discretion may require that insurance coverage be modified if it's determined they're inadequate for the grant.**

42. On Section 4 of the application, what is the difference between the two below questions? Are you asking about funded areas in the first, and about the need for additional types of infrastructure and technologies? Or are they essentially the same question? For reference:

      • *9. If the proposed Project is in an area that is subject to an existing federal or state funding commitment for reliable speeds of 100/20 Mbps, explain why there is an identified need for additional broadband investment that is not met by existing federal or state funding commitments.*

      • *32. Is there an identified need in the Project Service Area for additional broadband infrastructure that is not met by existing federal or state funding commitments?*

      • *33. If no, explain whether service to households and businesses in the Project Service Area should require a holistic approach that provides service to a wider area in order to make ongoing service of certain households or businesses within the service area economical.*

      a. **Question 9 requires each applicant to provide justification for overbuilding an existing federal or state funded area in narrative format, which is a federal requirement. Question 32 is a yes/no confirmation with explanation (Question 33), should the ISP select "No".**

GIS Mapping Questions

1. Are these files (GIS Template Data), available?
   a. **Files are available for download from the Citrix File Share folder for Map Challenges. They will also be made available through the scdigitaldrive.org hub site, which the SC Broadband Office maintains.**
2. We are required to serve more than 80% of housing units in the census block with adequate service in order to consider it served. In the Data Dictionary, there is a field "HUDensity" for approx. number of households in a given census block. Is this the standard value we should compare the # of households we serve against? i.e. we must serve more than 80% of HUDensity
   a. **The field FUSEDHU represents a count of the total number of housing units in a given census block, according to US 2020 Census Data. The value should be considered a planning-level number and may differ from the actual number of housing units in a census block. Caution should be taken relying solely on the value census provides, as it may be an over-representation of the total number of housing units when evaluating whether a given ISP's build meets the 80% threshold. The data dictionary will be corrected to reflect this.**
3. If we have questions about symbolizing the data for the field "served", do we set up a call with James Tanis?
   a. **The value "N" and "PA" in the served field will give you all areas eligible for funding.**
   b. **The ORS will seek to develop a 'how to' that provides the steps necessary to symbolize map data to align with the eligibility map published on the ORS' website.**
4. What if you know there are homes in a NA block?
   a. **Notify the Broadband Office as part of the Challenge process.**
   b. **The ORS would prefer ISPs use their housing unit counts in a census block.**
5. Why is SC data due on the exact day it is due to the FCC? It would be appreciated to have a week's time at a minimum for carriers to produce state specific data.
   a. **ORS has instituted a frictionless submission process whereby the State of South Carolina is requesting the same data submitted to the FCC. Should this approach create a challenge for ISPs serving multiple states, please communicate with the SC Broadband Office, and we will work to accommodate ISPs on a case-by-case basis.**
6. I am told by our GIS/Engineering team they are seeing the SC Broadband office address listed on each one. 1401 Main St, Suite 800, Columbia, 29201
   a. **This is from the template GIS data. All data in the template files are examples and should be removed.**
7. We have a question about using Geo tagged photos as evidence for challenges and in future progress reports. Do you want one big batch of photos and you have a way of ID-ing them or mapping them? Do we need to create individual folders within our Citrix folder and save them based on the project area?

      a. **All documentation relating to challenges to the eligibility map should be placed in the map challenge folder. One large batch of photos for the eligibility map challenge is fine.**

8. When filling in the template data for the "PerServed" field, I would like to know what percentage that is supposed to represent. Any clarification that you can provide would be greatly appreciated. Thank you and have a great day!
      a. **It stands for the percent of served housing units in the census block**

9. Data in the K12TotStud field? Some have a value and some just say "YES"? Can you explain?
      a. **The GIS Data dictionary defines this.**
      b. **The examples listed above would suffice as long as there is an address tied it.**

10. Will address level service availability/speeds/provider information become available from ORS at some point?
      b. **No provider information will be published at the address level from ORS**

11. Shouldn't the unserved or underserved criteria be tied to the K-12 criteria? Otherwise the served areas throughout the state would be eligible?
      a. **All the priority areas are unserved. Unserved as defined by 3/2022 Eligibility Map**

12. With regard to the GIS submission, what if there are no "fiber or cable routes" where high speed fixed wireless will be used?
      a. **If the technology being proposed is fixed wireless, please submit in place of the line work a coverage map in the format the FCC is requiring in Sept 2022.**

13. Will the State Broadband Office be providing technical assistance to applicants during the course of this process?
      a. **Technical webinars will be offered.**

14. Will any of the mapping layers be available to download? It's helpful to bring the data into our systems even if we will then build our project in the state mapping system for submission.
      a. **All GIS data is available on SCDigitaldrive.org and Citrix for download. One must fill out the data access request form to obtain access. https://arcg.is/1fiq1j**

15. While project planning is conducted prior to the submission of a broadband grant, detailed engineering is not completed unless the grant is awarded. Changes in equipment and fiber routes can happen between these two phases. When providing geodata on the actual equipment placement and fiber routes, does the 3' requirement pertain to the routes and equipment placement as submitted in the application or does it mean that the final disclosed locations of equipment and fiber, post-project completion, must align to the geodata provided at the time of project completion with updated, final routs and equipment?
      a. **The final disclosed locations of equipment and fiber, post-project completion, must align to the geodata provided at the <u>time of project completion</u> with updated, final routes and equipment.**

16. In your current coverage map that shows Non and Underserved areas (in RED) We noticed that there are also many of these areas (census blocks) that show RDOF awarded areas. In reading your FPR section we understand that you want to avoid duplicating investment efforts. Are you

suggesting we still submit based on your un-served Map?   Are you going to update and publish the ORS un-served Map if/when ISP's respond to the SCBBO?

   a. **Yes, applications, funded project register, and map challenges are to be submitted based on the March 31, 2022 eligibility map. A new eligibility map will not be created; however, a list of the census blocks that were successfully challenged will be published along with a GIS shapefile of census blocks reflecting those geographies.**

17. Does the ORS have a current list of Address Level information in these UnServed and High Priority areas?

   a. **The ORS does not have address level information for the unserved areas available.**

18. How do we determine the locations that we can apply for and estimating the total housing units within a census block for the ARPA SFRF grant opportunity?

   a. **The field FUSEDHU represents our best estimate of the total number of housing units in a given census block. It reflects US 2020 Census data that is augmented by SCDOE Public K-12 student information when necessary. The value should be considered a planning-level number and may differ from the actual number of housing units in a census block. Therefore, we recommend doing your own analysis to confirm the FUSEDHU totals before solely relying on them for grant applications. If you identify errors in FUSEDHU totals while you are doing detailed analysis for your grant application, we would be grateful if you document these and share them with our office via an email to broadband@ors.sc.gov when you have time. We are working relentlessly to keep our housing unit totals accurate.**

19. Do you have a reliable SC address dataset that you recommend (or require) that we use?

   a. **ORS does not have a required SC address dataset in which applicants must use, however, you may be able to work with county-published information for determining housing unit counts. Additionally, once you sign up for the FCC's new, required Broadband Data Collection program, the Broadband Service Location Fabric (BSLF) may also provide another valuable source of information.**

20. Will there be any additional webinars before the grant deadline?

   a. **No. A GIS training was held on 8/11/2022, focused on leveraging GIS as part of an ISP grant application submission. The slide deck of the presentation used has been posted on the ORS SFRF ARPA page for reference.**

21. The 8/11/2022 GIS training demo used ArcMap. Would there be any issues if we used QGIS to prepare all of the data, as long as it is in the format of the template Data Dictionary?

   a. **Any software can be used as long as the GIS data the ORS receives is attributed and formatted in the same way as the template GIS grant data provided by the ORS.**

22. GIS data submission just to clarify are just the shapefiles of census blocks with the attributes shared, our proposed consumers, proposed lines and slices. We don't actually have to submit a "Map" just the shapefiles to build the map?

   a. **Yes. For the GIS data, the ORS is expecting all the files in the template GIS data be sent back to us fully attributed and no map is required.**

23. In the uploaded shapefile template, there were four layers, but the data dictionary also includes one for "Network Junctions" -- was that overlooked in the template? So they are not required for the initial submission?

   a. **Network junctions GIS Data is not required for a grant application submission, but will be required as an as built upon completion of a project if awarded a grant.**