



# SC Broadband Advisory Council

*Enabling South Carolinians to Thrive in the Global Digital Economy*

South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff | January 10, 2023

# Agenda

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**Welcome / Roll Call**

Jim Stritzinger, Co-Chair  
Anna Berger, Co-Chair

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**SC Broadband Office Update**

Jim Stritzinger, ORS

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**SC Digital Equity Office Update**

Mike Shealy, Admin

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**Microsoft Digital Equity Dashboard Demo**

Allen Kim, Microsoft

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**Other Business**

All

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**Next Meeting – Tuesday, Apr. 11, 2023**

**Adjourn**

All

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# AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT

Act 244 (H. 4408) \$400 Million for SC Broadband Infrastructure

Enacted  
May 13, 2022

## State Fiscal Recovery Fund

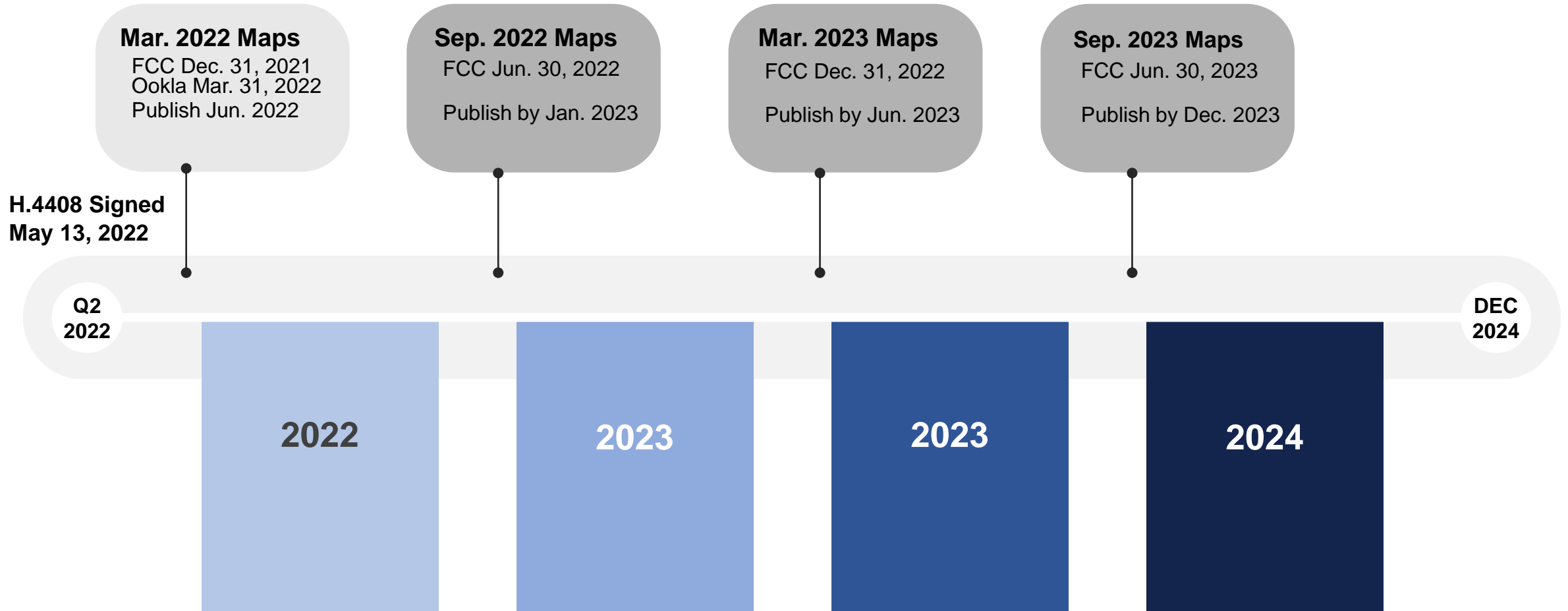
- \$214.2 Million

## Capital Projects Fund

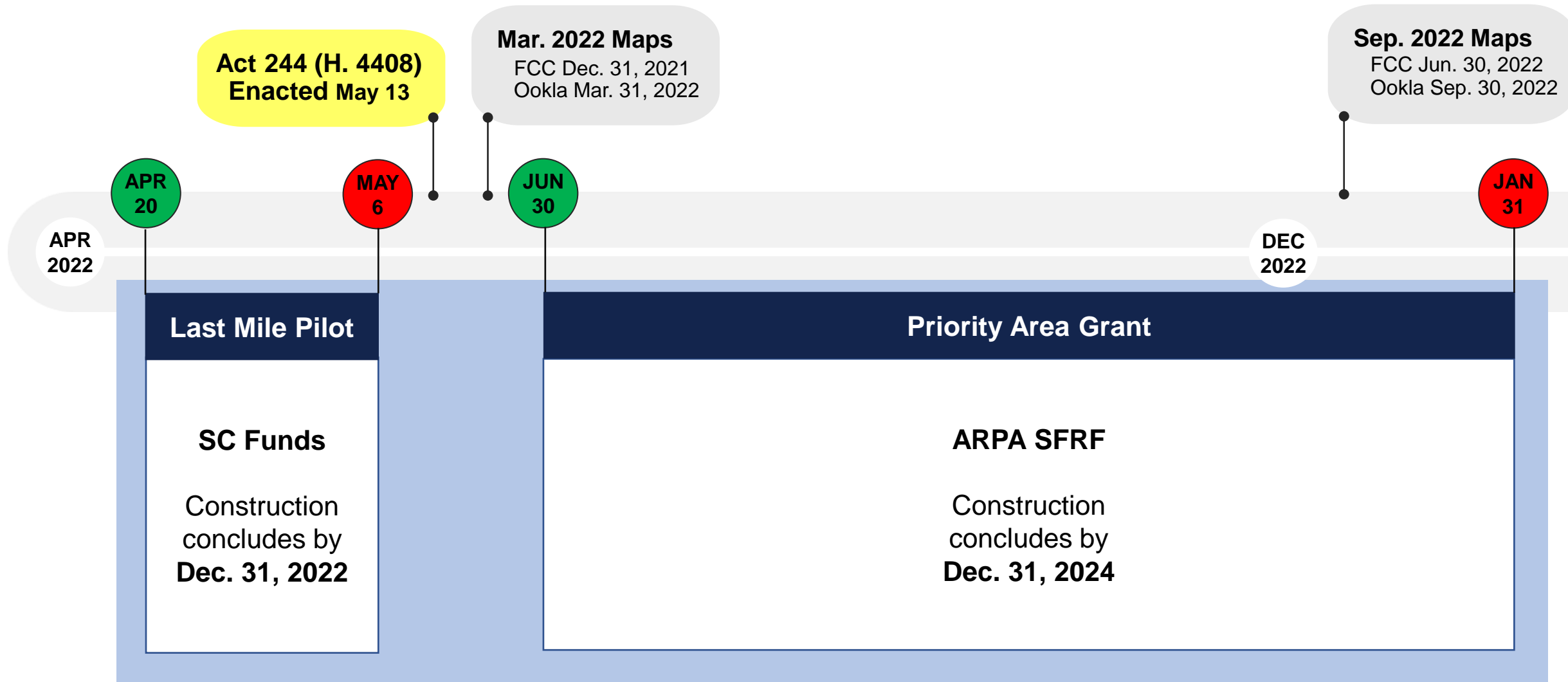
- \$185.8 Million

The funds in the ARPA Broadband Account shall be used to expand broadband infrastructure to households, businesses, and communities in the State that are unserved or underserved by broadband services.

# SC BROADBAND INVESTMENT ROADMAP



# 2022 SC BROADBAND GRANT PROGRAMS



\* All dates are pending approval and are subject to change without notice.

# What are Priority Areas?

## Unserved 2020 Census Blocks with:

### 1) More than 20 public K-12 student households; **or,**

- ✓ Broadband maps include data from 785,000 public school students that was provided by SC Department of Education

### 2) Difficult Development Areas as identified by US Housing and Urban Development (HUD); **or,**

- ✓ Defined geographies that are updated annually by HUD and are the basis for deploying Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) in the United States.

### 3) No Internet Service Provider (ISP)

- ✓ FCC Form 477 data shows null value for ISP as of Dec. 31, 2021.

*Source: H.4408, Section 9: Priority must be given to unserved areas with no current Internet Service Provider, Difficult Development Areas as identified by U.S. Housing and Urban Development, and census blocks that have a high concentration of unserved public K-12 student households as documented by the South Carolina Department of Education.*





# BROADBAND OFFICE

## 2022 Year in Review

September 30, 2022

**Preliminary**

### Areas of Need

#### Speed Tiers (download / upload)

- >= 100 Mbps / 100 Mbps (symmetric)
- >= 100 Mbps / 20 Mbps
- >= 25 Mbps / 3 Mbps

#### Unserviced Housing Units

- 100 or More
- 26 - 99
- 11 - 25
- 1 - 10
- Zero

### Best Available Technology

- Fiber | Speeds >= 100 Mbps/100 Mbps (symmetric)
- Cable (DOCSIS 3.1+) | Speeds >= 100 Mbps/100 Mbps
- Cable (DOCSIS 3.0) | Speeds >= 100 Mbps/20 Mbps
- Cable (DOCSIS < 2.0), All Other | Speeds >= 25 Mbps/3 Mbps
- VDSL (Fiber-To-The-Curb) | Speeds >= 10 Mbps/1 Mbps
- ADSL2, ADSL2+ | Speeds >= 6 Mbps/1 Mbps
- Fixed Wireless | Speeds >= 10 Mbps/1 Mbps
- ADSL, all other Copper | Speeds >= 3 Mbps/768 kbps
- No Internet Service Available

Data 2021: Based on SC Broadband Office analysis of FCC Form 477, Dec. 31, 2020 (pub. Oct. 29, 2021). In addition, multiple Internet Service Providers contributed their FCC Form 477, Jun. 30, 2021 data to augment and update the base dataset. Satellite and mobile broadband services excluded. Demographic data based on US Census 2010 information that was enhanced with ES11 premise-level information through Jun. 30, 2020. Ookla® Speedtest Intelligence® data from Jan. 1, 2019 through Jun. 30, 2021 combined for analysis in the region.

Data 2022: Based on preliminary SC Broadband Office analysis of FCC Form 477, Jun. 30, 2022 reported directly to our office by Internet Service Providers. Satellite and mobile broadband services excluded. Demographic data based on US Census 2020 information. Speedtest Intelligence data from Jan. 1, 2019 through Jun. 30, 2022 combined for analysis in the region.

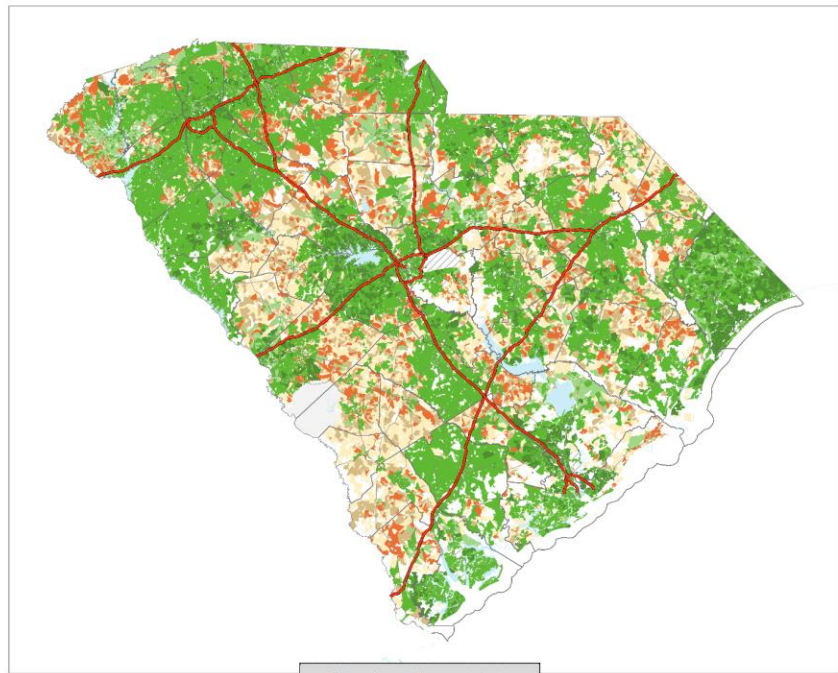
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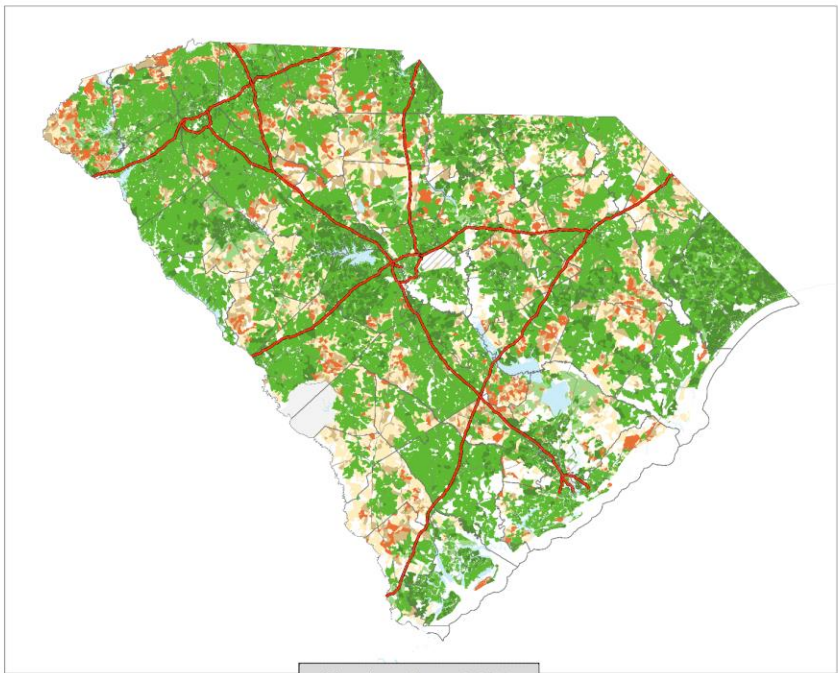
Submit comments or questions to [maps@ons.sc.gov](mailto:maps@ons.sc.gov)



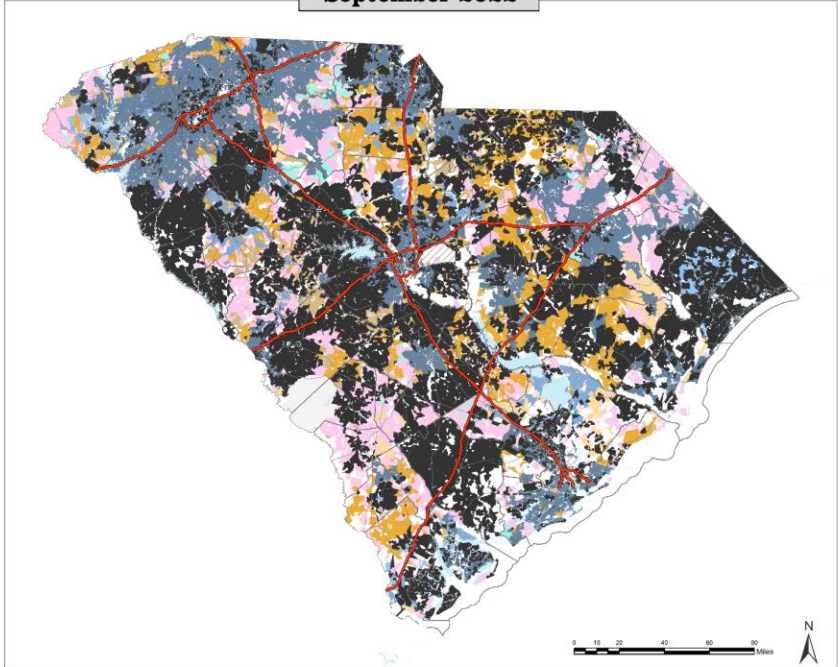
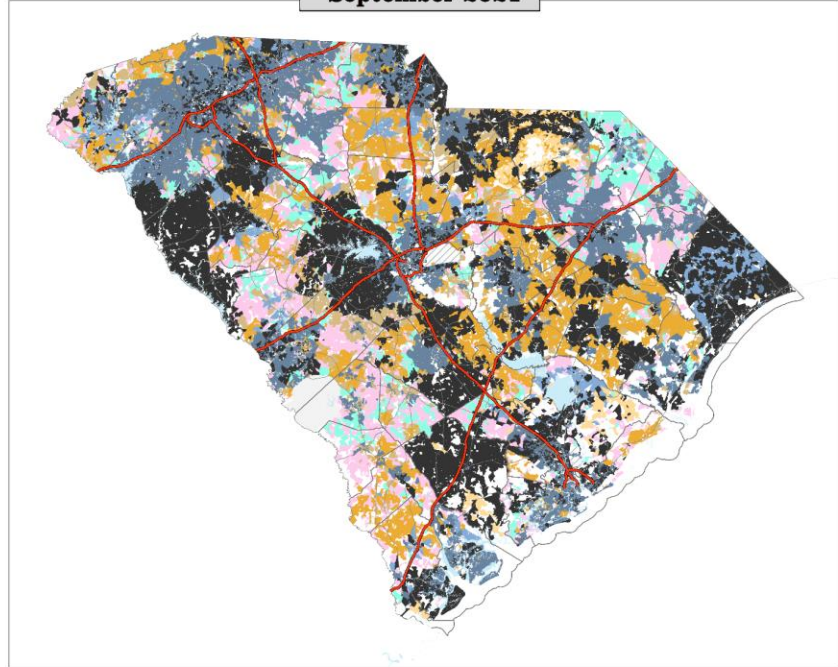
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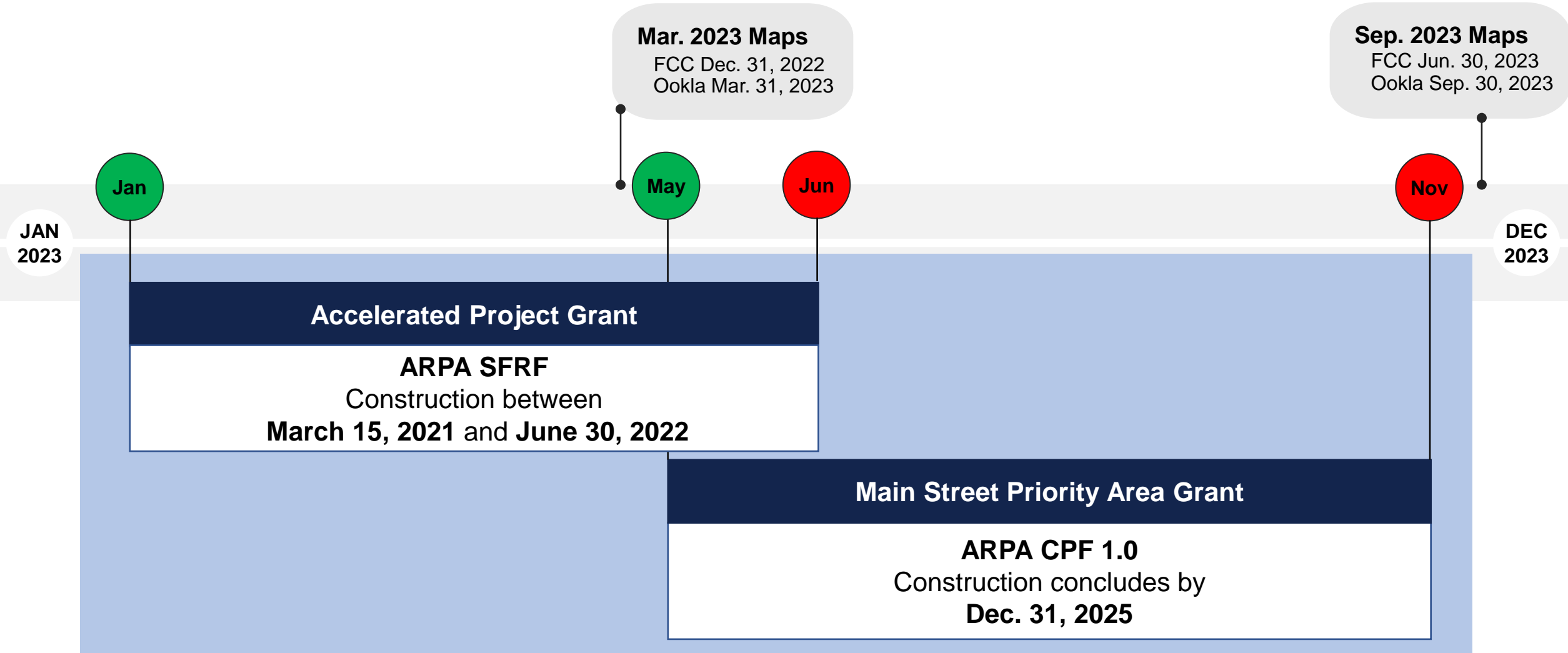
September 2021



September 2022



# 2023 SC BROADBAND GRANT PROGRAMS



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# What are Accelerated Projects? (Preliminary)

- 1) **Broadband construction to unserved areas that was initiated on/after March 15, 2021 and was operational by June 30, 2022.**
- 2) **Unserved Areas are defined by Sep 2021 SC Eligibility Map**
  - ✓ This map represents FCC Form 477 June 30, 2021 status and excludes DSL
- 3) **ORS will award approximately \$25,000,000 of the allocated ARPA funds**
- 4) **ORS will likely accept applications in Q1 2023**
- 5) **ISP must document operational status by June 30, 2022**
- 6) **ISP must support 100Mbps / 100Mbps (download/upload)**
- 7) **Require complete financial submission**

*Source: H.4408, Section 7B: The grant program may include an opportunity to reimburse a portion of construction costs, incurred on or after March 15, 2021, related to the expansion of broadband during the pandemic.*

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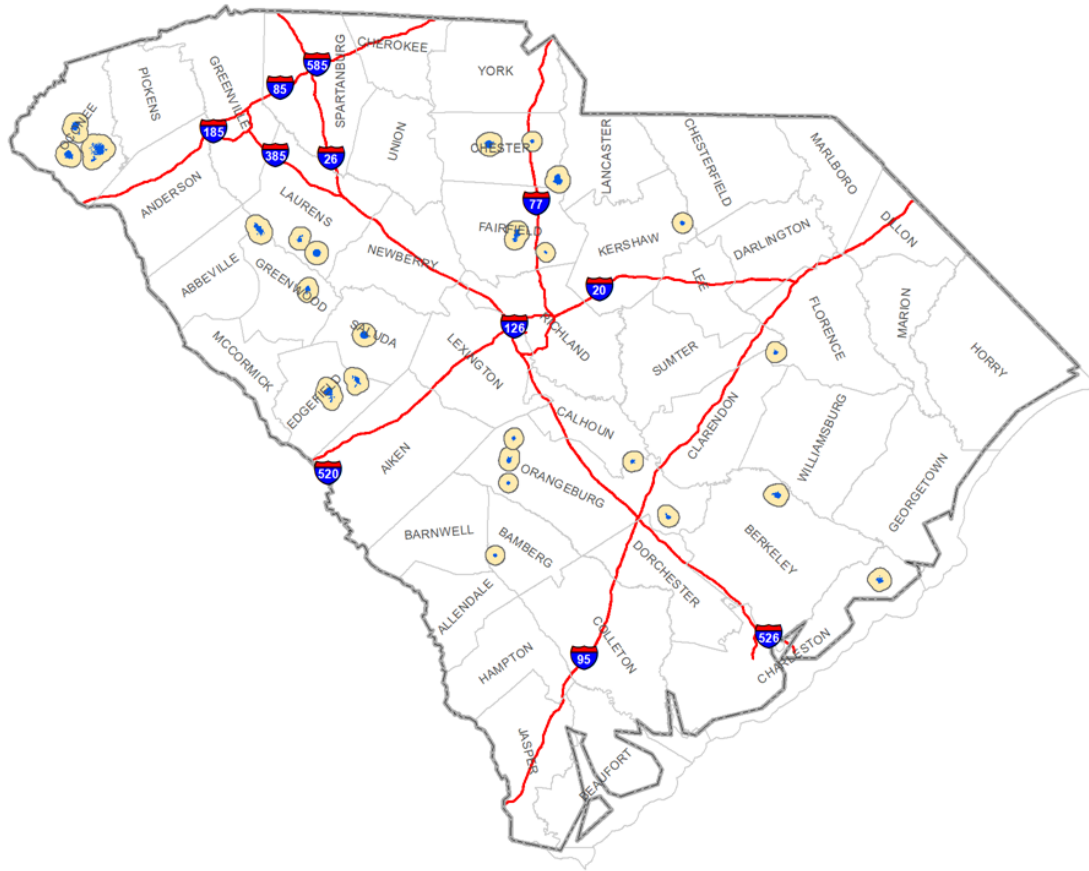
Capital  
Projects Fund

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The funds in the ARPA Broadband Account shall be used to expand broadband infrastructure to households, businesses, and communities in the State that are unserved or underserved by broadband services.

**THE  
NEXT, NEXT  
GREATEST  
THING**

**Main Street, South Carolina**



**1. Add Main Street Priority Areas**

- Main St + 2mi buffer

**2. Requires 100/100 Symmetric**

**3. “Dig Once” Opportunities**

- Water & Sewer (RIA)
- Roads (SCDOT)

# INFRASTRUCTURE ACT\* CREATES ~\$65B IN BROADBAND FUNDING

**NTIA will administer ~\$48B of this new funding**

**FCC to administer ~\$14B**

**\$14.2B**

*For Affordable Connectivity Program, which will replace the EBB program*

**USDA to administer \$2B**

**\$2.0B**

*Via the Rural Utilities Service*

**Private Activity Bonds**

**\$600M**

**\$600M**

*Authorizes State/local gov'ts to use private activity bonds for rural broadband*

**BEAD**

**DIGITAL  
EQUITY**

**TRIBAL**

**MIDDLE  
MILE**

**\$42.45B**

**\$2.75B**

**\$2.00B**

**\$1.00B**

**Title I - Broadband Equity, Access & Deployment Program**

Formula-based grant program for U.S. states and territories. BEAD aims to close the access gap for unserved & underserved areas of the country.

**Title III - Digital Equity Act**

Three programs, established for planning & implementation of programs that promote digital equity, support digital inclusion activities, and build capacity related to the adoption of broadband.

**Title II - Tribal Connectivity Technical Amendments**

Furtheres current Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program by investing an additional \$2B to fund broadband adoption and infrastructure projects.

**Title IV - Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure**

Provides funding to extend middle mile capacity to reduce cost of serving unserved and underserved areas and enhance network resilience.

\* Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Division F, Pub. L. 117-58 (Nov. 15, 2021)

Note: funding amounts inclusive of all administrative set-asides.



# BEAD (I/II) | THE "BEAD" PROGRAM WILL PROVIDE ~\$42B FOR INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

## OVERVIEW

**Official name:** Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment Program

**Funding pool:** \$42.45B

**Type of program:** State and Territory formula program

**Program objective:** to close the availability gap, as Congress finds that "access to affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband is essential to full participation in modern life in the United States."

## PROGRAM PRIORITIES

- 1 Unserved locations  
*No access to 25/3 Mbps*
- 2 Underserved locations  
*No access to 100/20 Mbps*
- 3 Community anchor institutions  
*Without gigabit connections*

### Eligible entity must also prioritize

- Persistent poverty / high-poverty areas
- Speed of proposed network
- Build time
- Demonstrated record on compliance with federal labor & employment laws

## OTHER KEY FEATURES

### Quality requirements

Specific network requirements are included e.g., speeds of at least 100/20 Mbps

### Matching requirement

Eligible entities must ensure that they or a subgrantee provide at least 25% match (*unless waiver granted*)

### Low-cost plan requirement

Required to offer a low-cost plan to eligible subscribers (*to be determined by NTIA*)

*Note: funding amounts inclusive of all administrative set-asides*



# BEAD (II/II) | STATES AND U.S. TERRITORIES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING, WITH LEGISLATION SPECIFYING ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

## ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

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"**Eligible entity**" for this program refers to **all 50 U.S. States and U.S. Territories** (including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands)

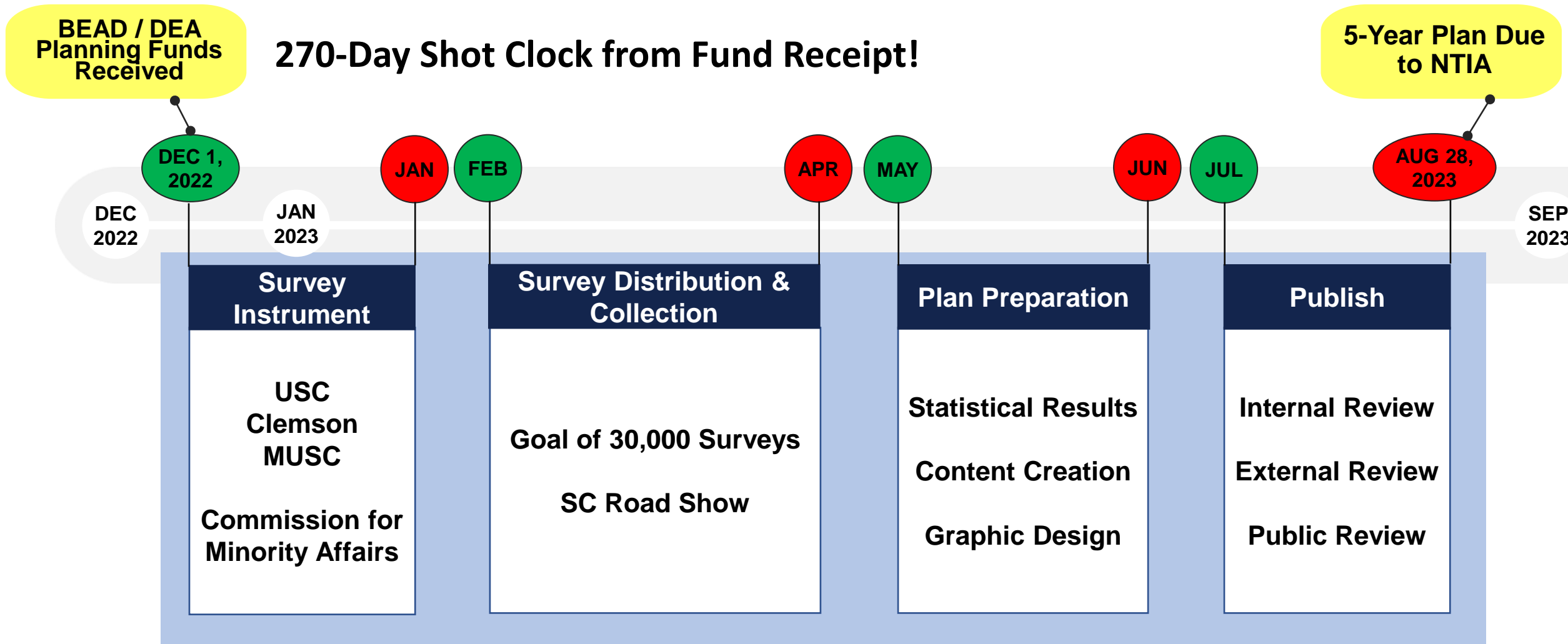
## ELIGIBLE COSTS & ACTIVITIES

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### Planning Funds

- 1) **Research & Data Collection**
- 2) **Publications, Outreach & Communication Support**
- 3) **Employee Training for SCBBO**
- 4) **Operating and Increasing Capacity in the SCBBO**
- 5) **Asset mapping broadband-related activities**
- 6) **Conducting surveys of unserved, underserved, and underrepresented communities to better understand barriers to adoption.**

# BEAD / DEA Planning Process







# DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE

JANUARY 10, 2023

# Creation of the SC Digital Equity Office

- July 12, 2022 by letter from Governor Henry McMaster to Assistant Secretary Alan Davidson, The South Carolina Department of Administration was tasked with administering the DEA Program Award.
- The South Carolina Digital Equity Office was born from this assignment along with guidance from our friends at EBO (Brian Gaines).

# Introduction:

South Carolina will create a robust and comprehensive five-year statewide digital equity plan that will serve as a benchmark and a roadmap for achieving digital equity in our state and meet the requirements established by NTIA in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. We will invest the State Digital Equity Planning grant funds in four major activities:

1. Staff recruitment and development
2. Community and stakeholder engagement
3. Data collection and analysis
4. Report development and distribution

# Timeline of Work:



- The plan development process began **12/1/2022** and will be concluded within 12 months with the delivery of a five-year State Digital Equity Plan.
- We will develop the plan in accordance with the statute and provide a minimum of 30 days for public comment and will incorporate comments, and responses to comments, prior to submission to NTIA.

# South Carolina Broadband Office - BEAD and DE Relationship



**BROADBAND  
OFFICE**



**DIGITAL EQUITY  
OFFICE**

- The Digital Equity staff will work in close collaboration with the Office of Regulatory Staff and the South Carolina Broadband Office.
- For both programs to succeed, working together will be crucial. We plan to be lockstep to ensure South Carolina leads in bridging the digital divide.

# After the Fiber, What are the impediments?

That is what we aim to find out...

- Costs
- Knowledge
- Devices
- Assistance

# Target Audiences

- Legislative directives included by Congress in the IIJA (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) specifically list the affected communities to include in the planning process :
- Minority Communities
- Rural Communities
- Veterans
- The Aged
- Tribal





# Strategy – Community Outreach and Engagement

- Engage communities and stakeholders throughout the entire planning process.
- Strategies including but not limited to, form a core planning team comprised of a diverse set of stakeholders and partners to lead and advise the plan's development, conduct a series of in-person and virtual public listening sessions throughout the state.
- Provide feedback mechanisms, and ensure all written materials are translated into multiple languages reflecting the communities we serve.
- Most importantly, include residents or 'lived experts' on the core planning team so the perspective of the disconnected can inform the entire planning process.

# Key Stakeholders:

- Members of the covered populations and historically disconnected communities (lived experts)
- State agencies, including but not limited to, Dept of Aging, Commission for Minority Affairs, State Library, Human Affairs Commission, Dept of Social Services, State Housing Finance and Development Authority, and Dept of Corrections
- State and local chambers of commerce or industry associations
- Cooperative Extension Services (Clemson University)
- County and Municipal Associations
- Regional councils of governments
- Statewide Economic Development Organizations
- Public and private higher education institutions, including the Technical College System, and HBCUs
- Healthcare systems and networks
- Faith-based institutions
- Entrepreneurs and business owners
- Trade organizations
- United Way Association
- Local media outlets and ETV



# Roadshow



The planning stage hits the road!

- Travel to 9 regional areas across the state that represent 26 communities.
- The goal : To participate in regional stakeholder engagement meetings, conduct community and stakeholder outreach, collect data, meet directly with stakeholders, and complete project activities.

# Funds – The Digital Equity Effect

- Some analysts have estimated the funds available for Digital Equity programs in South Carolina's at around \$40 Million.
- Some states may not use their entire federal allocation, so quality planning in South Carolina puts us in a good spot for those unspent funds if they are available.
- Additionally, there is nothing to prohibit the South Carolina General Assembly from appropriating more funding for Digital Equity activities.
- Much has been written about the State's labor force participation rate that lags the nation. In a post-COVID labor market, some workers enjoyed working remotely and are looking to return to the work force. However, some prefer partial or exclusive remote work. The Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment program (BEAD) coupled with the Digital Equity program (DE) present South Carolina with an opportunity to address the labor force participation rate through technology deployment. This then results in greater income generate and wealth creation in the Palmetto State.



**Thank you!**



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OFFICE**