



Welcome to  
ARConnect's  
**BEAD Challenge  
Process Webinar**

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

# Welcome

---



- **Welcome**
  - **Intro from Glen Howie, Arkansas State Broadband Director**
  - **Purpose of the webinar**
  - **Overview of the webinar**
-

# What is the BEAD Program?



- A grant program enacted as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) passed by Congress in 2021\*
- The **Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program** provides \$42.45 billion dollars of federal funding to expand high-speed internet access to unserved and underserved locations across the United States
- Arkansas has been awarded \$1.024 billion in BEAD funding to expand broadband to unserved and underserved areas in the state

\*(Public Law 117-58, also known as the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law”)

# What is the BEAD Challenge Process?



1

Your opportunity to weigh in on whether the map of locations eligible for BEAD funding in the state of Arkansas is accurate

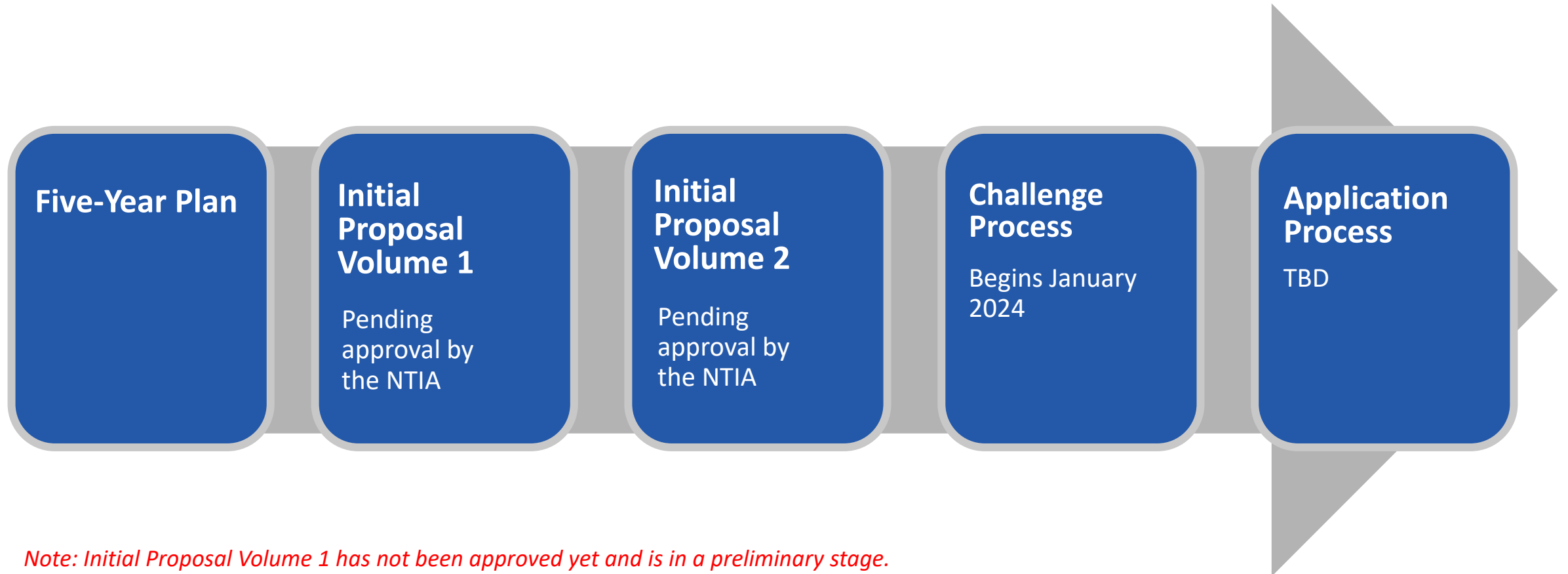
2

A process for ARConnect to confirm locations that are eligible for BEAD funding before sub-grants are awarded

3

The Challenge Process is a required component of the BEAD program

# BEAD Program Timeline



# Challenge Process Phases



There are four sequential phases in Arkansas' BEAD Challenge Process

1

## Phase 1

### Location Publication

One week prior to the start of the Challenge Phase, ARConnect will publish the locations that are eligible for BEAD funding

2

## Phase 2

### Challenge Phase

Challenges are submitted

3

## Phase 3

### Rebuttal Phase

ISPs respond

4

## Phase 4

### Final Determination Phase

ARConnect makes a final ruling to "sustain" or "reject" challenges

# What is Your Role as a Challenger?

As a challenger, it is your responsibility to:



**Be knowledgeable about the Challenge Process**



**Identify your primary point of contact for challenges**



**Register for the challenge process**



**Submit sufficient, clear, evidence within the allotted time frame**



**Respond in a timely manner to all communications from the ARConnect**

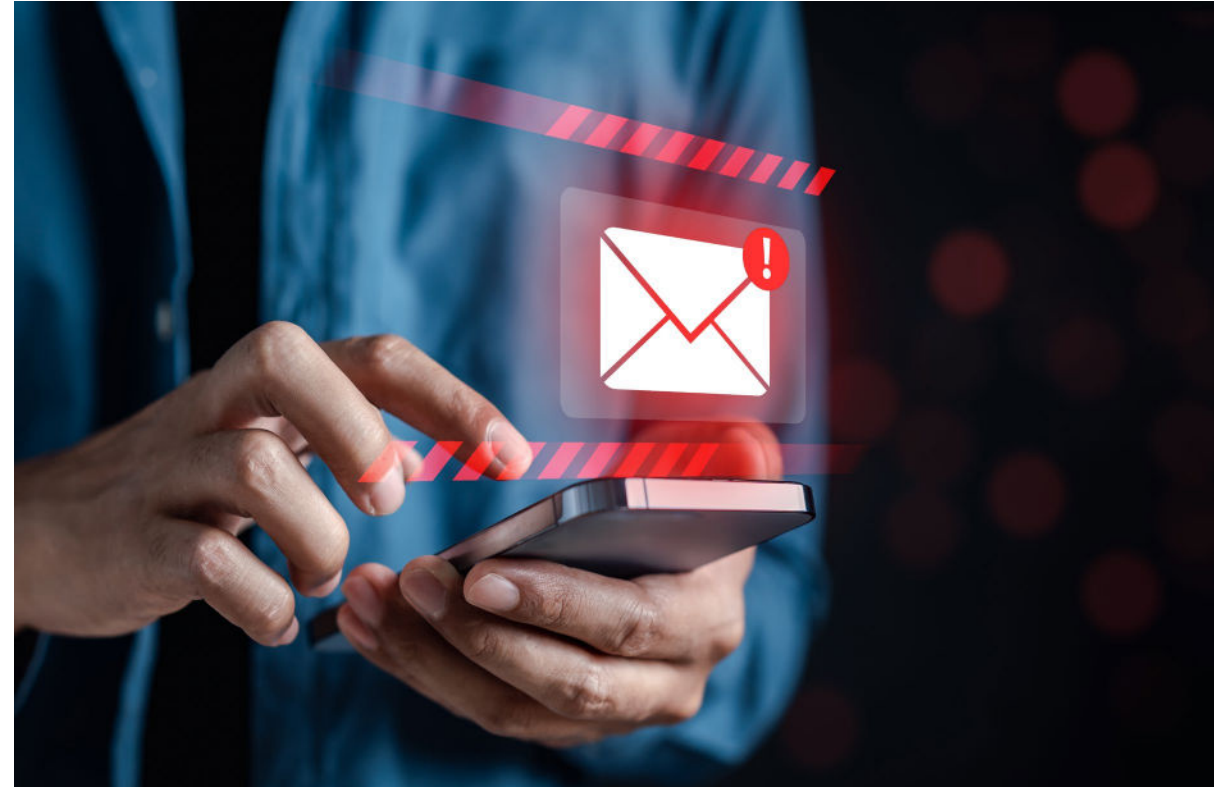
# Who May Challenge?

Per NTIA regulations, only the following entities are allowed to submit challenges during the BEAD Challenge Process:

Units of Local Government

Nonprofit Organizations

Broadband Providers (ISPs, etc.)






# What Can You Challenge?

Locations can only be challenged on the following grounds:

1. Planned or Existing Service	Locations where broadband service currently or will soon be deployed (not funded by federal or state grants)
2. Enforceable Commitment	Locations where broadband service currently or will soon be deployed (funded by federal or state grants)
3. Provider Service Level	Locations where the available broadband service shown on the map is incorrect (Availability, Speed, Latency, Data Cap, Technology)
4. Community Anchor Institution Classification	Locations that are incorrectly classified as CAIs or not classified as CAIs. Also, where availability of 1GB service to a CAI is incorrect

*Please note: The Challenge Portal can only accept between 1 and 500 locations per challenge. For additional locations, please submit a separate challenge.*

# Software Demo



CHALLENGE

- Dashboard
- Challenge Map

## Map Challenge Dashboard

[Invite Teammate](#)

[Challenge Submission](#)

The Arkansas BEAD map challenge process is now open! Prepare your challenges and rebuttals to ensure your community can get the broadband they deserve.

The BEAD map challenge process is an essential step conducted prior to deploying BEAD funding. Participation in the challenge process helps ensure that the map data reflects ground truth and is a key step in making sure that grant funding reaches communities in need.

[Learn more](#)

CHALLENGES SUBMITTED

0

CHALLENGES NEED REVISION

0

CHALLENGES WITHDRAWN

0

[My Submitted Challenges \(0\)](#)

[Needs Revision \(0\)](#)

[Initial Review Processed \(0\)](#)

[Withdrawn \(0\)](#)

[+ Add Challenge](#)

Challenged Entity


Challenge Type

Locations

Date Submitted

Status

Details



# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Are the BEAD Challenge Process and the FCC's Challenge Process the same thing?**

No. The FCC Challenge Process determines the map of locations (add, change, or remove locations from the map). Anyone can submit FCC challenges.

The BEAD Challenge Process determines which locations on the map are eligible to receive BEAD funding; that is, which locations are served, unserved, or underserved. Only permissible challengers (ISPs, Local Governments, and Nonprofits) can submit BEAD challenges.

**As an ISP, once we have been notified that a location(s) has been challenged, can we immediately respond to the challenge?**

No. ARConnect has designed its Challenge Process to work in distinct phases to allow for fairness and to give ample time for our staff to review.

The rebuttal option of the Challenge Portal will not be available until the official start of the 30-day rebuttal phase.

## Can individuals participate in the BEAD Challenge Process?

Per NTIA regulations, individuals cannot submit a challenge. However, they can contact their local nonprofit or government unit:

- County Judges
- Mayors
- Members of the General Assembly
- School Board Members
- Justices of the Peace
- City Council Members

## How many locations can be submitted in one challenge?

To facilitate the review phase, please limit your location number and geographic area. The Challenge Portal will only accept up to 500 locations, but we recommend fewer.

## What happened to funds from CPF or other grant opportunities?

Several funding programs may have already been awarded to bring high-speed internet to your neighborhood such as the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) and the Capital Project Funds (CPF).

Per NTIA regulations, funding from the BEAD program cannot be used to fund deployment at locations that were already awarded or approved through RDOF, CPF, or any other funding source.



## What can you as a permissible challenger do to make the process smoother?

- Be prepared
- Have your evidence ready
- Submit fewer locations per challenge
- Choose the correct category



# Live Q&A

# What Can You Do Now?



1. Identify the **contact in your organization** who will submit challenges and rebuttals
2. Review the **Challenge Process Resource and User Guide** when it becomes available on the ARConnect website
3. Continue **collecting speed test data** for challenges
4. Start collecting **submission evidence documents**
5. Obtain a **CostQuest** Tier D license for ISPs or Tier E License for Local Government and Nonprofits
6. Email [broadband.challenges@Arkansas.gov](mailto:broadband.challenges@Arkansas.gov) to **get updates** on BEAD and other broadband programs in Arkansas

# What Happens After the Challenge Process?



ARConnect will conduct a final review to check for locations with enforceable commitments



ARConnect will submit the BEAD Challenge Process results to NTIA for final review and approval



At least 60 days before grant funds are allocated ARConnect will post for public notice the final list for each location and CAI

# Reminder of Dates

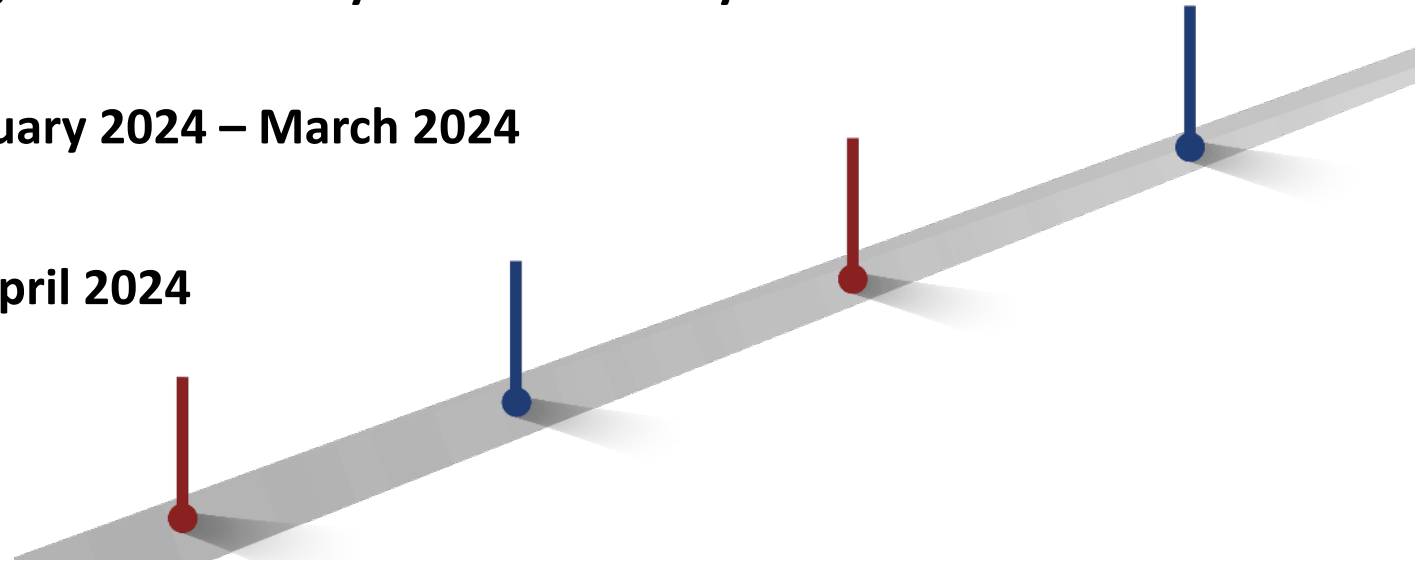
**Each phase will run for 30 calendar days**

Challenge Process Starts: **January 2024**

Challenge Phase: **January 2024 – February 2024**

Rebuttal Phase: **February 2024 – March 2024**

Final Determination Phase: **March 2024 – April 2024**





Thank You



# Contact Us

Questions related to the challenge process should be directed to [broadband.challenges@arkansas.gov](mailto:broadband.challenges@arkansas.gov)

Questions related to the Challenge Portal should be directed to [arhelpdesk@ready.net](mailto:arhelpdesk@ready.net)