

Kansas Broadband Capital Project Fund Webinar

07-21-2022 @ 12:30 PM Central Time

Program Questions:

Q. Will Kansas prioritize the grant applications it receives for this program, and if so, how?

A. Yes. In trying to ensure that every Kansas resident has access to broadband, our first priority is to focus on grant applications that will serve households and businesses in unserved areas – those with broadband speeds of less than 100 Mbps / 20 Mbps.

Q. Can a government/business partnership be considered eligible?

A. Partnerships Public/Private are welcome and encouraged.

Q. When is the last possible date to enter applications?

A. The last day to submit an application will be Friday August 19 at 5 PM central time. The earlier it is submitted the quicker we can review the information. If there is a delay to the start, we will adjust the dates.

Q. Please clarify, did you say you will review applications as they are received? Or wait until the deadline to begin evaluating the applications?

A. Applications will be reviewed as soon as they are received.

Q. How will they work the rolling window if not everyone submits at the same time?

A. The earlier it is submitted the quicker we can review the information. All applications will receive equal consideration through the 4-week application window.

Q. Apart from the phase one and phase two is there another application window?

A. For this grant, there are no other application windows planned. The application window is 4 weeks in which to submit applications for this grant program.

Q. Are applications from the first phase (2-week window) prioritized in terms of awards?

A. All applications will be treated equally for the evaluation. Those submitted in phase one will be considered sooner but no awards will be made until all applications have been submitted in the 4-week application window.

Q. Friday August 19th at what time of day is the official deadline for submission?

A. 5 PM Central time is the deadline on Friday 8/19/22

Q. Are we able to submit multiple applications?

A. Multiple applications are allowed. If you intend to do so, please let us know which of them is ranked #1, #2 etc.

Q. Would you rather see a project that includes a small community and a rural area as one application or keep those separate in two applications. Jade mentioned keeping the higher cost areas for this program and more populated areas for BEAD

A. Either way is acceptable. We would like to see any multiple projects submitted by the same applicant be prioritized by the applicant at time of submittal.

Q. Do we have to submit all documents at once? Specifically, if a community wants to invest in our project but it needs council/commission approval, the 4-week timeline may be difficult.

A. If an applicant is in a situation requiring council/commission approval, it is recommended an application be submitted and let us know that more information will be coming. That way an initial program review can take place and we will then connect with the applicant to discuss any missing or delayed information such as described in this question.

Q. I assume you are using the "Submittable" system for applications? Is the "one at a time" restriction still there, or can we work on multiple applications at the same time?

A. This is a function that is inherent to Submittable. A team can collaborate on one project but only one project submission can be open for the responsible persons login. However, if you set up multiple email addresses for an end user, you could theoretically have multiple submissions going.

-For example, I could create multiple email addresses to point to me and monitor those boxes. tjones@xyz.com, thjones@xyz.com... when creating the submission create a different login/email address for each project you wish to have open at once. This should allow you to work on multiple project submissions at the same time.

Q. For the filing of an "Intent to Apply", the data gathering process for small and rural providers will take a bit of time.

A. The filing of an "Intent to Apply" is optional and is not a requirement for submitting an application. All applications must be submitted within the 4-week application window.

Q. If we are planning a Middle Mile Grant Application through NTIA, and plan to apply to this fund, and the plan would hinge on fiber placement through Middle Mile, would we go ahead and apply for fiber placement on this grant as a whole as we won't know grant status on the Middle Mile Grant yet.

A. You can apply via this grant program to have a Middle Mile component of your plan, but you must also have a last mile component. The terms of this grant do not allow for a stand-alone Middle Mile application.

Q. If a project has just begun and is already under construction is it ineligible for this grant process?

A. Any project already started prior to this grant program would be ineligible for this grant.

Q. Can you explain the 24-month project period compared the statement where we have to have build out completed by 2026?

A. The goal is to keep the funded projects in a concise period of project development/construction, thus the 24-month window. If, however, there are circumstance that could cause a project to not meet that window, there may be room for some flexibility to be determined on a case-by-case basis. The requirement from Treasury is that all grant funds must be expended by December 2026.

Q. Is there a scoring criterion?

A. The application is divided into three areas and will have an overall "weighting" per area as follows: Approximately 50% will based on technical components,

approximately 15% on financial components and approximately 35% on project components. Please refer to the posted guideline document for a more definitive breakdown of the subparts for each area.

Q. Is there any guidance that can be provided on the submittal of confidential information?

A. Anything an applicant marks as Confidential and Proprietary will not be posted. If we have questions about the material, we will initiate discussion with the applicant prior to posting any documentation.

Q. Will challenge results be announced?

A. We will work with the applicant and challenger to come to a resolution for each challenge that is received.

Q. If a proposed project partially infringes on an area already served with 100/100 (as found during a challenge process), would the entire application be rejected, or would the applicant have a chance to redraw their proposed project area?

A. We would give the applicant the opportunity to resubmit their application so their proposed project would not cause an over-build into an area already served at 100/100.

Q. Would you happen to have a copy of the presentation today or will it be posted on the website.?

A. The entire webinar was recorded and should be on the KOBD web page shortly. The actual deck used for the webinar will also be posted.

Q. If we have further questions about anything on this grant program, who do we send our questions to for a response.

A. Use this email for all CPF Questions: KDC_Broadband@ks.gov The question will be directed to someone to log, review and then respond.

Financial Questions:

Q. Are the staff labor costs to prepare the grant an eligible cost?

A. No. Grant preparation staff costs are not eligible expenses. Please see the posted guideline document for eligible and ineligible costs.

Q. With the 5-87% match on the sliding scale, what are some determining factors in where an applicant might land in that range?

A. Cost per location passed is the determining factor. There is a calculator in the guidelines to assist in determining this match.

Q. Are you accepting in-kind match as a part of the % match?

A. Yes, up to 50% can be in-kind.

Q. Will county ARPA funds be allowed to be used as part of the match?

A. Yes.

Technical Questions

Q. what mapping is the state using to determine under and unserved? NTIA most recent data or FCC latest 477? Is there state specific mapping available?

A. Both the FCC 477 data as well the NTIA Broadband USA Data and Mapping tool (NBAM) will be required to be used by the applicant to verify their project area will not cause an overbuild into an area already served at 100/100. These same two resources will also be used by KOBD to validate the information contained in the application. At this time, a Kansas Office of Broadband Development map is not available.

Q. Regarding eligible areas: In areas covered by wireless service is the requirement that ALL households covered in the wireless coverage footprint must be able to simultaneously access the internet with a minimum of 100/20 to be considered underserved?

A. All areas served by the existing service provider must be able to offer their advertised speed in their entire area served. If there is a concern about simultaneous delivery of service at the advertised speeds, that situation will need to be validated by empirical data.

Q. what about technology? fiber focused?

A. The grant requires a focus on technology to deliver 100/100. We are open to looking at specific circumstances where that is not feasible. Further the project is required to deliver the same speed through out a proposed service area. Obviously, that is a challenge for fixed wireless.

Q. As an applicant, if an area is over-reported in terms of speeds available, does the majority rule for customer testimonials also apply? Is it also an either-or on the applicant side (i.e., speed tests or customer testimonials)?

A. Yes, the majority rule would apply. As noted in the program section, it is one or the other, not both.

Q. Challenge for fixed wireless areas that claims they serve the area with 100/20, if a tower site serves 75 locations and only can provide 100/20 to 2 or 4 locations but not the other locations, is this considered served at 100/20 or is the requirement to provide the 100/20 simultaneously to all locations? Is the requirement 100% or 90% of locations at 100/20 to be considered served?

A. It is a 100% requirement for 100/20 based on Treasury's Guidance for the Grant. See earlier comment regarding simultaneous connections at advertised speeds.

Q. If the 477 shows an area is served with 100/20, but the NTIA NBAM shows the median test speed for the same area is much less than 100/20, is this considered unserved, or do we need to submit additional supporting documentation (speed tests, testimonials, etc.) proving the area is unserved?

A. We believe this situation would be unlikely, but any discrepancies will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Any additional supporting speed test data or any additional documentation would be helpful if this situation arises.

Q. For challenges where provider already exists, will Speed Tests AND Consumer Testimonials, or one or the other?

A. One or the other

Q. On the 477 map, if a provider is showing 1,000M down and 15M up, is that considered unserved? With having the download speed but not the upload, I wasn't sure how that fit into the definitions.

A. Unserved: For purposes of the CPF Program, an unserved area is defined as a designated geographic area in which households or businesses are without a fixed, terrestrial connection supporting at least 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload speeds. (<https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Capital-Projects-Fund-Guidance-States-Territories-and-Freely-Associated-States.pdf>)

Q. What if it's an area that has a 100/20 wireless company with no plans of building fiber, but the rural area has partnerships/funding to work with a provider to build the fiber capabilities?

A. Yes, in general this would be eligible as it is less than the desired 100/100. Please Note: While we are going to focus on unserved areas, that also means we will be looking for the degree of being unserved as compared to other projects being submitted. In other words, we will look at applications that are going to improve the offered speeds in unserved areas (less than 100/20) but we will provide more focus on areas like 25/3 that need to get upgraded to 100/100 vs an area that is at 100/15.

Q. Can end-of-line tests be used for to validate network performance on a challenge response?

A. Yes. This is essentially the speed test we are referencing. We would expect there to be a modem involved to represent the customer experience and that the maximum speeds shown for the end of line test to be offered as an available service. This is in line with the 477 data requirements.

Q: If we propose multiple projects under the same application, is the match request the same for the entire application based on the total customer count and cost or does it vary based on the cost and customer count for each individual project within the application?

A: The applicant match is calculated based on the entire application submission, not individual projects within the submitted application. The application must reflect the total application cost and total number of locations passed within the proposed service area(s). With this in mind, it may be more beneficial to submit separate applications for high-cost projects and low-cost projects.

Q: In one of our potential service areas, most of the census blocks show as unserved per the 477 and NBAM, but a couple of census blocks show as served, even though they are not. Would we only have to provide survey data/customer testimonials for half of the consumers in just the census blocks showing served in order to refute the 477 data? Since the rest of the census blocks already show as unserved on the 477 and NBAM, I assume that this would be sufficient data for them.

A: Supporting documentation is only required in the event you are challenging the accuracy of available mapping data. Survey data / consumer testimonials would be needed only for the disputed census blocks showing served according to the FCC Form 477 data. Survey data / consumer testimonials would not need to be provided for the remaining census blocks that show as unserved.

Kansas Broadband Capital Project Additional Questions

07-26-2022

Q: On page 9 of the CPF Program Guidelines document, the instructions state to use 2020 census block identifiers in defining the proposed service area. In the "Determination Of The Available Broadband Service" section, we are instructed to use FCC Form 477 and NBAM data to determine "served" status within the proposed service area, but the FCC Form 477 data is in 2010 census block format. Which census block format should we use for defining the proposed service area and determining broadband service availability status?

A: After further review, the 2010 census block data format should be used to define the proposed broadband service area, in lieu of the guidance on page 9 of the CPF Program Guidelines. The 2010 census block data format should also be used to determine broadband service availability status when populating the "Form 477_NBAM" spreadsheet.