

BEAD Top-11 FAQ

Beyond the Final Proposal

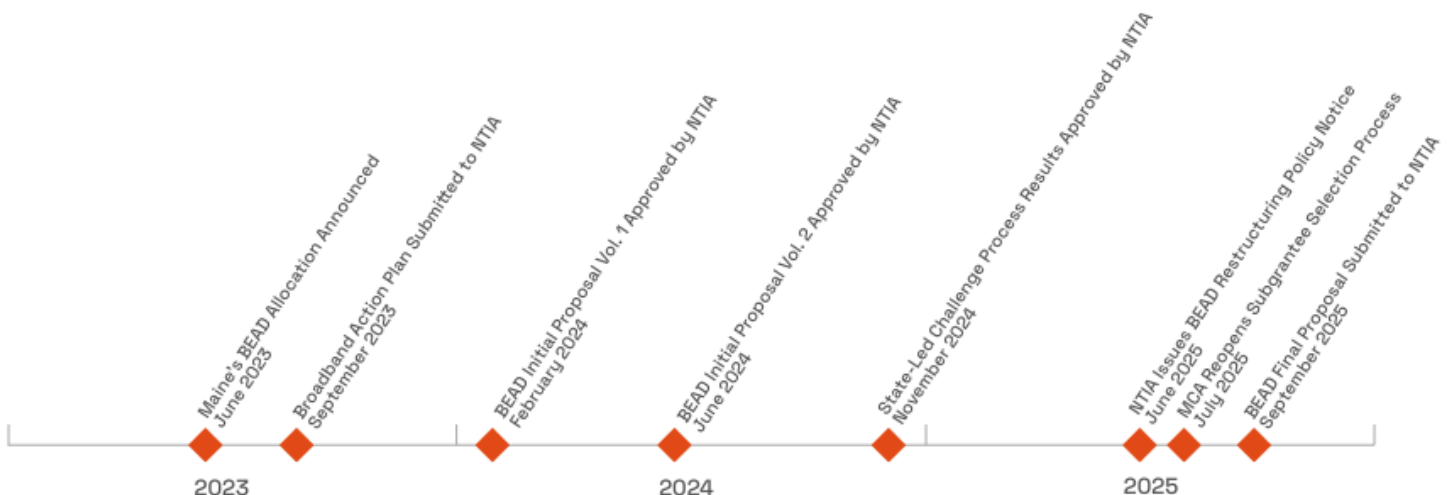


1. Where is Maine in the BEAD Program implementation timeline?

On September 3, MCA submitted Maine's BEAD Final Proposal to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for approval. This proposal outlines the plan to serve the remaining 23,260 homes and businesses in Maine with reliable, affordable broadband internet, taking us one step closer to closing the digital divide for all people in Maine. NTIA has committed to reviewing and approving final proposals within 90 days.

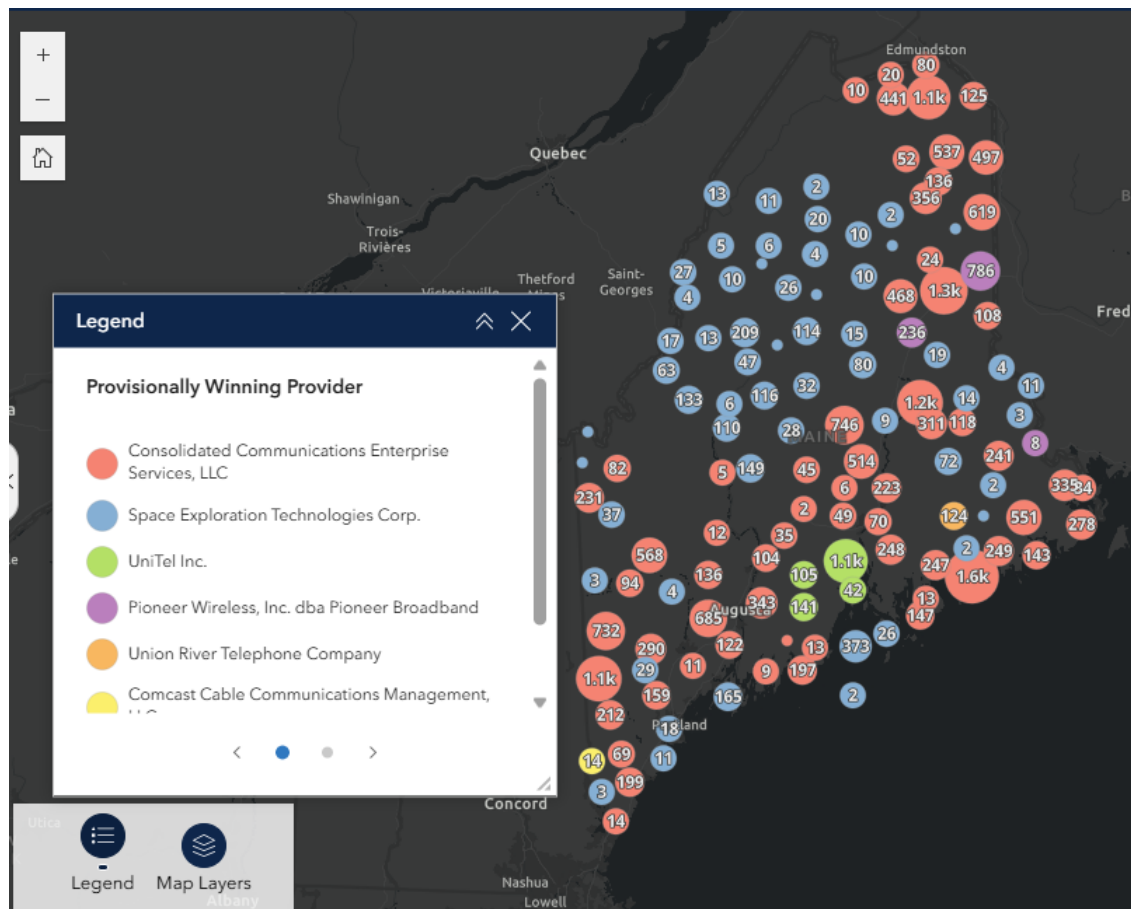
Maine's BEAD Final Proposal supports MCA's ability to continue deploying fast, reliable internet in a way that leverages both public and private funding to reach as many homes and businesses as quickly as possible. High-level provisional outcomes of Maine's BEAD Subgrantee Selection Process include:

- **100% coverage for all locations**
- \$48 million in BEAD deployment funding provisionally awarded
- \$109 million in matching funding from applicants
- \$2,080 average subsidy per location
- 25 Projects with 6 ISP Partners
- Diverse technologies, including 85% Fiber, 14% Low Earth Orbit Satellite (LEO), and 1% Hybrid Fiber/Coax



2. Which communities will be served by the BEAD-funded infrastructure projects?

Provisionally awarded locations are available on the [BEAD Public Viewer](#) map. Select the Provider Map to display BEAD-awarded locations by provisionally winning provider, or select the Technology Map to display locations by provisionally winning technology. The number shown above each point represents the number of locations served by that provider or technology in a general area. Detailed locations become visible as you zoom in.



3. How were different technologies selected for BEAD-funded projects?

As with prior programs, MCA evaluated all technologies and applied them to different areas to meet a comprehensive set of needs, including geography, terrain, cost, and population density. Through BEAD, MCA received applications for fiber, cable, hybrid fiber/coax, and Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite projects. In accordance with the BEAD NOFO and NTIA's BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice, all internet technologies were considered for funding as long as they could meet reliability and scalability requirements.

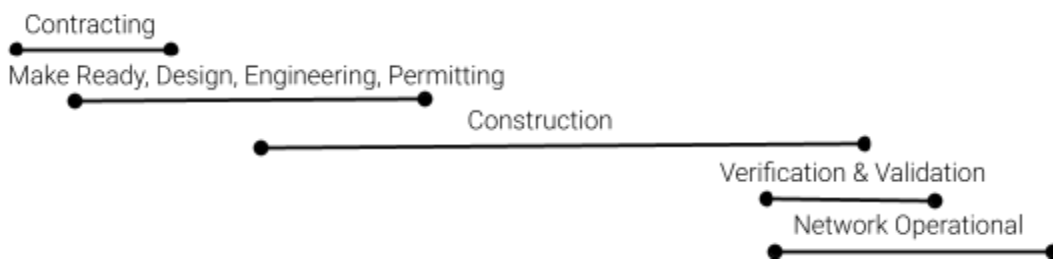
Ultimately, provisional BEAD-funded projects in Maine will consist of 85% fiber, 14% LEO, and 1% hybrid fiber/coax. Using the [BEAD Public Viewer](#) map, select the Technology Map to display locations by provisionally winning technology.

4. What is the timeline for the completion of BEAD-funded infrastructure projects?

On November 18, 2025, MCA received approval for Maine's BEAD Final Proposal from NTIA. We are promptly working with the awarded ISPs to execute contracts, which must be completed within 180 days.

Following contract execution, awarded ISPs will take additional next steps, including design, engineering, and permitting (pole attachment permits and NEPA/EHP), which can range from 6-18 months. This stage will be followed by construction, which can range from 1 to 4 years.

Following the completion of the construction process, MCA then reviews all projects through a verification & validation process, which includes both a technical audit of physical infrastructure and a desk audit of costs and grant funding uses. This process typically takes 1 to 2 months. While the final verification and validation process is underway, the network is generally operational, and customers can begin subscribing.



The process and timing for each project can vary due to several factors. In some cases, one portion of a large project might be completed before another. MCA will work with the awarded ISPs to proactively communicate the progress of each project to the communities and individuals who will be receiving the service.

5. My neighbor is being connected to high-speed internet through the BEAD Program, but I am not. How is this possible?

Unlike some other recent infrastructure projects in Maine, projects funded through the BEAD Program do not necessarily follow town or municipal boundaries. BEAD projects target those remaining homes and businesses that do not currently have high-speed internet of at least 100/20 Mbps. These can be in pockets within a community, and they might be standalone "islands". If your neighbor is being served through BEAD and you are not, one of two things is likely happening:

1. You already have high-speed internet through the same or a different provider than your neighbor. If you're unsure of what service is available to you, use the [FCC National Broadband Map](#) to enter your address and see what is available to you.

2. Your home or business will be provided with service through a separate federal broadband program. There are several federal broadband programs, being administered by different federal agencies, with different timelines for implementation. MCA administers some of these programs on behalf of the State of Maine; others are administered independently by the federal agency. Ultimately, each home and business can only be served by one program to reduce duplicative efforts between programs and funding sources.

For the programs that MCA manages in Maine, we sometimes have the flexibility to create efficiencies between different programs, allowing homes and businesses within close proximity to be served at similar times. Depending on the funding source and federal administration, we don't always have this flexibility.

	Federal Administrator	Timeline**
Broadband Infrastructure Program*	US Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)	2026
State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF)*	US Department of Treasury	2026
Capital Projects Fund (CPF)*	US Department of Treasury	2026
Enabling Middle Mile Broadband Infrastructure Program*	US Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)	2026
Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program*	US Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)	2029
Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program	US Department of Commerce, National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)	Rolling, 4 years to build
ReConnect	US Department of Agriculture (USDA)	Rolling, 5 years to build
Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF)	Federal Communications Commission (FCC)	2030
Enhanced Alternative Connect America Model Program (E-ACAM)	Federal Communications Commission (FCC)	2038

**Administered by MCA in Maine.*

***Extensions can be requested for infrastructure projects under specific conditions.*

6. What will happen to locations in Maine not served with BEAD funding?

The purpose of the BEAD Program is to reach remote, hard-to-reach homes and businesses that currently have no internet or have unreliable internet with speeds <100/20 Mbps. There are instances where locations may not be served by the BEAD Program, such as newly constructed homes or locations that do not appear on the FCC National Broadband Map.

Although there are specific locations that can not be directly funded by the BEAD Program, MCA will work with ISPs to proactively identify alternative funding sources and where service

can be provided purely through private ISP investment. As these networks expand into new areas, there will be a greater overall ability for all homes and businesses to be served with fast, reliable internet. Recognizing that the baseline will continue to evolve, MCA will continue to strive to achieve true universal broadband coverage for all residents of Maine.

7. What is the status of the Working Internet ASAP (WIA) Program, as it relates to the BEAD Program?

MCA designed the Working Internet ASAP (WIA) Program to align with the requirements and locations served through the BEAD Program. Through the implementation of the WIA Program, MCA has gained valuable insights that can now be applied to the BEAD Program. As MCA awaits approval of its BEAD Final Proposal, WIA enrollment for eligible locations remains open. You can learn more and enroll at www.maineconnectivity.org/wia.

8. Maine's BEAD allocation was \$272 million, but only \$48 million in BEAD funds have been provisionally awarded. Why is there a difference in funds allocated and provisionally awarded?

Submission and approval of Maine's BEAD Final Proposal are critical steps to accessing Maine's full \$272 million allocation through the BEAD Program. And yet, there is one major outstanding unknown: what happens to the remaining BEAD funds that are not included in the infrastructure deployment awards?

Understanding the outcome of these remaining funds is crucial to ensuring sustainable access, affordability, and adoption of our expanded connectivity infrastructure. MCA is currently awaiting further guidance from NTIA on this topic and will continue to work with federal and state partners to ensure we can maximize the impact of Maine's full BEAD allocation.

How did we get here? Here's what we do know:

1. Maine's BEAD Final Proposal recommends infrastructure awards totaling \$48 million to reach the last 23,000+ homes and businesses, and up to 750 Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs), including libraries, community centers, and healthcare facilities. 85% of the awards will fund fiber to the premise.
2. Applicants have committed to matching BEAD funds with a 69% private financial match, resulting in an average subsidy of \$2,080 per location.
3. The "Benefit of the Bargain (BOB)" round resulted in nearly \$200 million in deployment cost savings in Maine. This can be attributed to the significant private financial match from ISP partners, NTIA's BEAD Restructuring Policy Notice, which prioritized competition, and MCA's deployment of \$250 million of state, federal and private funds

over the last three years, resulting in the connection of 86,000 unserved and underserved locations.

4. Lastly, our work is not done. To achieve the TRUE benefit of the bargain, we need to ensure the long-term sustainability of infrastructure deployment through critical enabling investments identified in the legislation that created the BEAD Program.

9. How would MCA use Maine's remaining allocated BEAD funds?

Infrastructure deployment, combined with enabling investments, ensures that no one is left in the digital dark, empowering people, businesses, institutions, and communities to thrive in a connected world. Based on the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) legislation, which created the BEAD Program, BEAD funds can be used for “non-deployment” uses that facilitate critical enabling investments in internet infrastructure. These investments include:

- Wireless and Cellular Infrastructure: Enhancing network capacity and reliability for remote areas.
- Service to Community Anchor Institutions (CAIs) and Multi-Dwelling Units (MDUs): Ensuring vital community hubs and residential complexes have high-speed internet, including telehealth, distance learning, and remote work.
- Job Training & Skill Expansion: Equipping the workforce of tomorrow through digital literacy and technical training, central to the rapidly expanding Artificial Intelligence-based economy.
- Cybersecurity: Infrastructure hardening, training, interagency coordination

MCA is working with NTIA and other states to ensure Maine's full BEAD allocation is fulfilled.

10. How will MCA sustain investments being made in internet infrastructure through the BEAD Program?

The key to sustaining investments in internet infrastructure through the BEAD Program is ensuring that individuals and communities can meaningfully utilize the internet once it's available to them. This can take several forms, including:

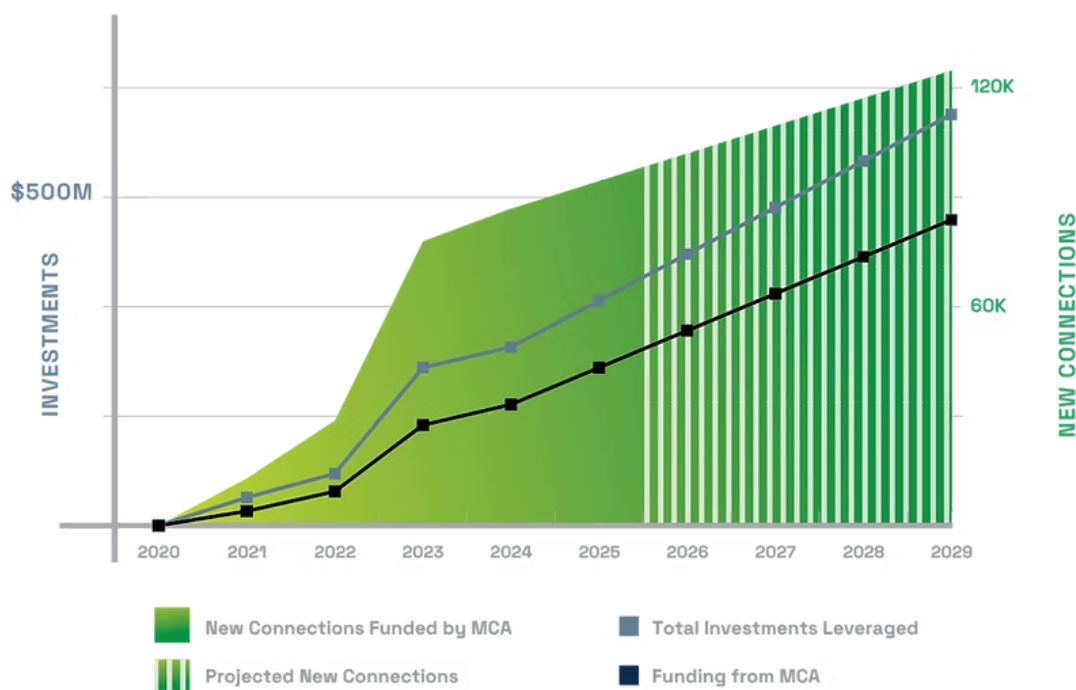
- Affordable internet service
- Access to a device that meets the user's needs, and technical support if something goes wrong
- Digital skills, including the ability to stay safe online
- Accessible local and state government resources

Beyond internet infrastructure, MCA has invested in places and people to facilitate these needs. MCA has also recently launched [Maine Tech Share](#), which sources and redistributes

underused devices from private companies and public organizations, and [Tech Help for ME](#), a resource for people in Maine to find local resources that meet their needs. Both initiatives are powered by the [Digital Opportunity Fund](#).

11. Outside of the BEAD Program, how is MCA contributing to comprehensive connectivity for Maine?

Including the BEAD provisional awards, MCA has facilitated the investment of more than \$400M of state, federal, and private funds to connect more than 110,000 homes and businesses across Maine in the last four years.



According to data from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), [Maine experienced the third-highest fiber growth](#) among states between June and December 2024. Maine's fiber growth can be attributed to MCA's [All-In Programs](#) ([Connect the Ready](#), [Reach Me Line Extensions](#), [Partnerships Enabling Middle Mile](#)), legacy ConnectMaine programs including [ConnectMaine Bond Fund projects](#), and [NTIA's Broadband Infrastructure Program "Mountains to the Sea" projects](#), and significant direct investments from private internet service providers. MCA has also contributed to reliable wireless and Low Earth Orbit satellite internet service through [Jumpstart](#) and the [Working Internet ASAP Program](#).

This fall, MCA will begin developing a Cellular & Wireless Action Plan to assess and better understand the cellular and wireless connectivity needs across the State. Stakeholder engagement, including a public survey, will begin in Fall 2025, with an interim report scheduled for release in December 2025. The final Cellular and Wireless Action Plan is expected to be complete by Summer 2026 and will include a public comment period.