

Broadband Matching Grant Initiative Frequently Asked Questions

Updated October 3, 2023

FAQ Revision Log

Version	Date	FAQ
1	September 5, 2023	Original version
2	October 3, 2023	The following question was added under the Eligibility section: “What happens if the addresses are verified, but do not have a FCC Fabric ID?” Revision is noted with “[added 10/3/2023]”

The below FAQs are for informational purposes only and are intended solely to assist potential recipients in better understanding the Broadband Matching Grant Initiative and the application requirements. The FAQs do not and are not intended to supersede, modify, or otherwise alter applicable statutory or regulatory requirements.

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[Program Overview](#)

What is the Broadband Matching Grant Initiative?

New Hampshire’s Broadband Matching Grant Initiative (BMGI) provides matching grants to internet service providers (ISPs) and municipalities to improve broadband availability across New Hampshire. BMGI is designed to fund broadband infrastructure projects bringing high-speed internet to areas currently lacking service of 100/20 Megabits per second (Mbps). BMGI will provide a state match to either an internet service provider (ISP) or New Hampshire municipality to build internet infrastructure in areas of the state that, because of their topography, location, or cost, have not been able to access broadband internet.

Under the Broadband Matching Grant Initiative (BMGI), the State, through the NH Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA) will administer a grant program subsidizing up to 75 percent of eligible project costs for broadband infrastructure projects that bring service to unserved or underserved properties. BEA believes this will alleviate the fiscal impact of community-driven broadband investment for both the ISPs and the municipalities, as well as reduce the reliance on bonding.

Projects must be completed by Dec. 31, 2026.

Who is administering the Broadband Matching Grant Initiative funds?

New Hampshire’s Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA) is responsible for the administration of the grant program, including but not limited to disbursing funds, managing applications, performing grant monitoring activities, and supporting all required federal reporting as determined by the U.S. Treasury.

What type of funding is available through the Broadband Matching Grant Initiative?

The Broadband Matching Grant Initiative is a competitive grant program. BMGI is funded using the State’s allocation of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Capital Projects Fund (CPF) monies, CPF is administered by the U.S Department of Treasury. Please see below for additional context on Capital Projects Fund (CPF):

Capital Projects Fund (CPF): Funded as part of the American Rescue Plan (ARPA), CPF promotes equity by prioritizing investments in unserved and underserved communities through addressing the infrastructure challenges laid bare by the Coronavirus pandemic, especially in rural America, Tribal communities, and low- and moderate-income communities. CPF provides \$10 billion to fund critical capital projects that enable

work, education, and health monitoring in response to the public health emergency. NH is investing \$122 million in Broadband Infrastructure programs to provide high-speed internet to locations that lack access to adequate service. Of that, \$25 million will be used for the Broadband Matching Grant Initiative.

Is the revised Bea 400 Broadband Matching Grant Initiative approved?

Bea 400 - Broadband Matching Grant Initiative (BMGI) was officially adopted on August 30, 2023, by The State of New Hampshire – Office of Legislative Services. The certified rule is effective September 1, 2023, with an expiration date of September 1, 2033.

Eligibility

Who can apply for funding under the Broadband Matching Grant Initiative?

Eligible applicants for this program are (A) an Internet Service Provider (ISP); and (B) a New Hampshire Municipality. If the applicant is an ISP, both the ISP representative and the chair of the governing body must sign the application. If a municipality is the applicant, it can sign the application alone, but must still provide the required information as proscribed by RSA and administrative rules. A municipality cannot support more than one ISP for the same exact address, but a municipality can support multiple ISPs for distinct addresses.

What are eligible projects under the Broadband Matching Grant Initiative?

Eligible projects under the Broadband Matching Grant Initiatives must (A) provide internet service with speeds of 100/100 Mbps symmetrical to households and businesses upon project completion; and (B) apply for a state match of up to 75% of project costs to alleviate the fiscal impact of community-driven broadband investment and reduce reliance on bonding.

Treasury’s guidance requires the ISP/Municipality applicant to consider whether the federally funded networks will be affordable to the target markets in their service areas and encourages recipients to require that a federally funded project offer at least one low-cost option at speeds that are sufficient for a household with multiple users (100/20 Mbps).

How does the Broadband Matching Grant Initiative define unserved?

The term “unserved location” is defined as a household that lacks any access to qualifying broadband service (<25/3 Mbps). An unserved location is also one that has never been selected by a broadband provider to receive Federal or State funding to deploy qualifying broadband service.

How does the Broadband Matching Grant Initiative define underserved?

The term “underserved location” is defined as a location that lacks access to reliable broadband services that offer a speed of not less than 100 Mbps for downloads and a speed of not less than 20 Mbps for uploads.

Is there a matching requirement for Broadband Matching Grant Initiative recipients?

Each eligible ISP/Municipality shall provide matching funds of at least 25% of eligible project costs.

What are eligible locations for Broadband Matching Grant Initiative funds?

All addresses must be a Broadband Serviceable Location (BSL) that is included in the most recent version of the Federal Communications Commission’s Fabric ID, as of June 2023. An address without a Fabric ID is not eligible for BMGI funding. Costs associated with construction on private property when broadband infrastructure is present in the adjacent public ROW or easement are eligible for BMGI funding, if the address has a Fabric ID.

What happens if the addresses are verified, but do not have a FCC Fabric ID? [added 10/3/2023]

The subrecipient must provide proof that they have filed a revision request to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for the addresses in question.

What are eligible uses of Broadband Matching Grant Initiative funds?

Allowable costs are determined in accordance with the cost principles identified in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, including Subpart E of such regulations for States and non-profit organizations, as well as in the CPF Final Rules.

Based on the scope of the Broadband Matching Grant Initiative, below are requirements for ISP/Municipalities to follow when deploying broadband infrastructure builds:

- Provide speeds of 100Mbps/20Mbps.
- Projects must target unserved locations
- Service providers must participate in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).
 - The ACP helps ensure that households can afford the high-speed internet they need for work, school, and healthcare by providing a discount of up to \$30 per month (or up to \$75 for eligible households in high-cost areas). Additional one-time discounts are available for eligible households to receive internet-capable devices.
- Offer at least one low-cost option at speeds that are sufficient for a household with multiple users (100/20 Mbps).

What are ineligible uses of Broadband Matching Grant Initiative funds?

Ineligible costs include those costs that are unallowable under the applicable Federal cost principles. Ineligible costs are listed below:

- An ISP/Municipality may not use grant funds received under the Broadband Matching Grant Initiative to purchase or support any covered communications equipment or service (as defined by the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act of 2019 (47 U.S.C. 1608)).
- The following cost prohibitions apply to a provider of broadband services that is an ISP/Municipality. As a condition of receiving a grant under the Broadband Matching Grant Initiative, a provider of broadband service that is receiving the grant is prohibited to:
 - Target projects implementing middle mile connections
- Interested applicants should refer to New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated (RSA) 12-O:62, V, for ineligible costs. This policy states that “Eligible costs shall not include any operating expenses or other recurring costs.”
- Additionally, expenses related to the installation at a customer’s home are not funded through BMGI. Refer to 12-O:62, IV, to find a non-inclusive list of the eligible costs for the BMGI program.

[How to Apply](#)

When does the application period open, and when is the deadline to apply?

BEA is accepting applications for the Broadband Matching Grant Initiative from Tuesday, September 5, 2023. Application materials will be made available on the BMGI webpage ahead of time. The application will be accessible for 45 calendar days, closing for review on Friday, October 20, 2023, at 3PM EST.

What is the Application Process?

1. Applications available to ISPs/Municipalities September 5, 2023.
2. Prospective grantees will be required to complete and return an application package detailing scope and timeline. All applicants are required to submit all of the required information in Part BEA 404.02(a) 1-10.
3. Applications are due by October 20, 2023, at 3PM EST.
4. BEA will begin the review process after the application deadline. There is no benefit for applicants to submit earlier compared to later in the application window, but it is of utmost importance to submit a fully complete application.
5. BEA will score all applications for BMGI.
6. Eligible applicants are granted awards.
7. BEA will disburse payments to the subrecipients. BEA will determine payment structures once awards are negotiated.

Will BEA offer trainings or other resources to help with the application?

BEA is offering webinars for the Broadband Matching Grant Initiative. Please find sign up links and updates on the BEA Office of Broadband Initiatives website.

In a situation where an applicant must construct broadband infrastructure through municipality “B” to serve locations in municipality “A”, is the endorsement of municipality “B” required?

The applicant must adhere to local zoning, permits, and restrictions. BEA may not mandate anything that overrides those municipalities’ local regulations and laws.

How will an ISP document its agreement with a municipality on the number of addresses unserved?

The signatures of the ISP and municipality on the application will be witness to the agreement and accuracy of the list of addresses unserved or underserved.

If a municipality shares a border with another municipality that has unserved addresses along the border, should the municipalities submit a combined application or separate applications?

A municipality that has a common border would benefit from submitting a joint application instead of submitting separate applications. An application with multiple municipalities that form a partnership with a single ISP for the purposes of BMGI will have greater technical impact compared to multiple smaller projects. This will enable economies of scale and minimize the overall monitoring and compliance administration for the proposed project.

Grant Award and Reporting Requirements

What rules or requirements will the grant award be subject to?

BMGI recipients will comply with applicable statutes and regulations, including but not limited to the provisions listed in the project agreement. Per 2 CFR 200, recipients must comply to the monitoring and reporting provisions outlined. These provisions include the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements (2 C.F.R. part 200), ARPA CPF Standard Terms and Conditions, generally applicable federal environmental laws and regulations, Domestic Preference for Procurements (Buy American), and Contracting with Small and Minority Businesses, Women's Business Enterprises, and Labor Surplus Area Firms.

What are the federal labor and construction standard requirements applicable to this program?

The applicant should refer to the CPF terms and conditions and the State of New Hampshire requirements for additional rules and regulations as they apply. Based on the "Guidance for the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund for State, Territories and Freely Associated State," the Davis-Bacon Act is not required under the CPF

program, but subrecipients will need to provide BEA with additional documentation of wage and labor standards.

Does a municipality need to apply for the Affordability Connectivity Program (ACP)?

Municipalities do not apply to be a part of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) if they partner with an internet service provider that participates in the ACP. Municipalities may use the FCC tool in the following link to identify eligible ISPs that they can partner with: <https://www.fcc.gov/affordable-connectivity-program-providers>. If the municipality is not partnering with an ISP, they must register at SAM.gov to become a service provider and register for the ACP.