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## **NOTICE**

### **IN THE MATTER OF BROADBAND EQUITY ACCESS AND DEPLOYMENT (“BEAD”) GRANT INITIAL PROPOSAL VOLUME 1**

**Docket No. [TG23100743](#)**

#### **REQUEST FOR COMMENTS**

The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (“NJBP” or “Board”) invites stakeholders and members of the public to provide written comments on this Notice regarding a draft of New Jersey’s Initial Proposal Volume 1 in connection with the BEAD Grant Program.

#### **BACKGROUND**

On November 16, 2021, the United States Congress enacted the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“Infrastructure Act”), also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which includes the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (“BEAD”) Program. The Infrastructure Act provides that “access to affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband is essential to full participation in modern life in the United States,” and that the digital divide “is a barrier to the economic competitiveness of the United States . . .” and “disproportionately affects communities of color, lower-income areas, and rural areas.”

To provide access to high-speed broadband to all Americans, the Infrastructure Act created the BEAD Program. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (“NTIA”), which is a part of the U.S. Department of Commerce, administers the BEAD program and has delegated primary administration and implementation to states and other eligible entities.

The BEAD Program provides \$42.45 billion nationwide with the principal focus of deployment of broadband service through a state-administered competitive funding program.

States and other eligible entities are allocated BEAD funds based on a nationwide location-by-location map of broadband service (“the National Broadband Map”) compiled by the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) as required by the Broadband Data Improvement Act.

NTIA calculated BEAD funds for each state based on the sum of the minimum state’s initial allocation of \$100 million, the calculated high-cost allocation based on each state’s share of unserved locations in high-cost areas, and the final allocation calculation of any remaining funds. The remaining funds allocation is based on the number of unserved locations (residential and business) as a proportion of the national total. As a result of this allocation calculation process, NTIA has determined New Jersey’s BEAD funding allocation is \$263,689,548.65.

#### **Initial Proposal Volume 1**

In accordance with NTIA instructions, the New Jersey Office of Broadband Connectivity (“OBC”) has drafted Volume 1 of its Initial Proposal under the BEAD Program. OBC is sharing this draft of New Jersey’s BEAD Initial Proposal Volume I to solicit public comment on its contents.

**TAKE NOTICE** that the Staff of the NJBPU (“Staff”) hereby invites all interested parties and members of the public to submit comments in connection with the draft Volume 1 of New Jersey’s Initial Proposal pursuant to the BEAD Grant Program. The draft of Volume 1 of New Jersey’s Initial Proposal is available at the following location: <https://www.nj.gov/connect/grants/bead/> .

**The deadline for comments on this matter is 5 p.m. on November 29, 2023.**

Please submit comments directly to the specific docket listed above using the “Post Comments” button on the Board’s Public Document Search tool. Comments are considered “public documents” for purposes of the State’s Open Public Records Act. Only public documents should be submitted using the “Post Comments” button on the Board’s Public Document Search tool. Any confidential information should be submitted in accordance with the procedures set forth in N.J.A.C. 14:1-12.3. In addition to hard copy submissions, confidential information may also be filed electronically via the Board’s e-filing system or by email to the Secretary of the Board. Please include “Confidential Information” in the subject line of any email. Instructions for confidential e-filing are found on the Board’s webpage. <https://www.nj.gov/bpu/agenda/efiling/>

Emailed and/or written comments may also be submitted to:

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*Sherri L. Golden*

Dated: October 24, 2023