

New Jersey Broadband Infrastructure Deployment Equity (NJBIDE) Pilot Program

Scoring and Evaluation

Updated January 16, 2025



Scoring overview

- 1 The NJBIDE Pilot Program is a **competitive grant program**
- 2 Applications shall be **scored independently based on the criteria** described in following slides and in Section 8.4 of the Application Instructions document
- 3 Applications with the **highest total score** will be prioritized for grant awards
- 4 As a means of breaking a tie for applications or project areas receiving the same score, the OBC shall give priority to the application or project area **proposing the lowest NJBIDE cost per prospective broadband recipient**

Applications will be scored using ten criteria (up to 10 points each)

1

Prioritizes open access network

2

Serves a designated priority area

3

Provides affordable service

4

Prioritizes infrastructure for last-mile connections

5

Prioritizes fiber

6

Serves the community

7

Projects project completion within 12 months

8

Subcontracts small businesses

9

Minimizes NJBIDE outlay

10

Highest need

1



Open Access

Up to **10** Points



Projects should prioritize an **open access network** owned, operated, or affiliated with a local government, non-profit organization, electric utility, or cooperative

Projects should be designed **to make sure the network is available to any service providers**

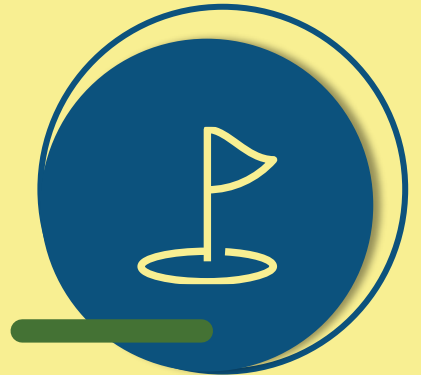
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Project either:

1 Serves a community within one of the NJBIDE priority areas:

- Atlantic County
- Burlington County
- Cumberland County
- Essex County
- Salem County
- Warren County

2 Is a public-private partnership where at least one partner is located in a NJBIDE designated priority area



Designated Priority Areas

Up to **10** Points

3



Affordable Service

Up to **10** Points



Full points will be awarded for projects:

offering a Broadband Service subscription costing **less than \$65 per month for at least 100/20 Mbps speed** and provide eligible **low-income households access to less than \$30 per month after federal subsidy programs**

4

Last-mile is priority

Full points are awarded for projects that propose exclusively last-mile infrastructure

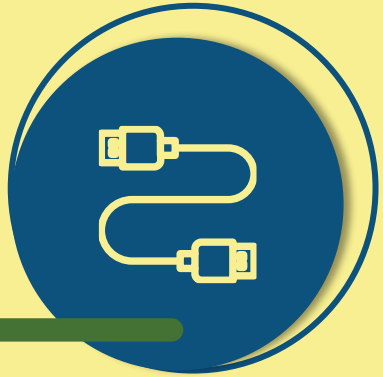
Partial points are available for hybrid projects where a portion of the costs are dedicated to last-mile infrastructure



Last-mile

Up to **10** Points

5



Fiber

Up to **10** Points



Projects will be awarded full points if they **exclusively utilize fiber-optic technology** for broadband infrastructure deployment

Projects will receive partial points if they utilize a hybrid solution, integrating **fiber-optic technology as a primary component** while also utilizing other technologies in specific areas to expand coverage or address particular geographic challenges

6 The applicant is a **public-private partnership**, and their **project actively engages relevant communities**

Applicants may demonstrate community engagement by providing supporting documentation of¹:

- Local community involvement in project design
- Local partnerships that support implementation or adoption efforts
- Letters of support from diverse communities with a critical need for broadband
- Tribal consultations (if applicable)

1. The following list is non-exhaustive



Serves the community

Up to **10** Points

7



Expedited Timeline

Up to **10** Points

Projects will be awarded full points if it is expected to be substantially complete¹ **within 12 months**

Partial points may be awarded to projects completed within 15 months



1. Substantial completion is defined as the date for which the Project can fulfill the primary operations that it was designed to perform, delivering services to end-users. At substantial completion, service operations and management systems infrastructure must be operational

8

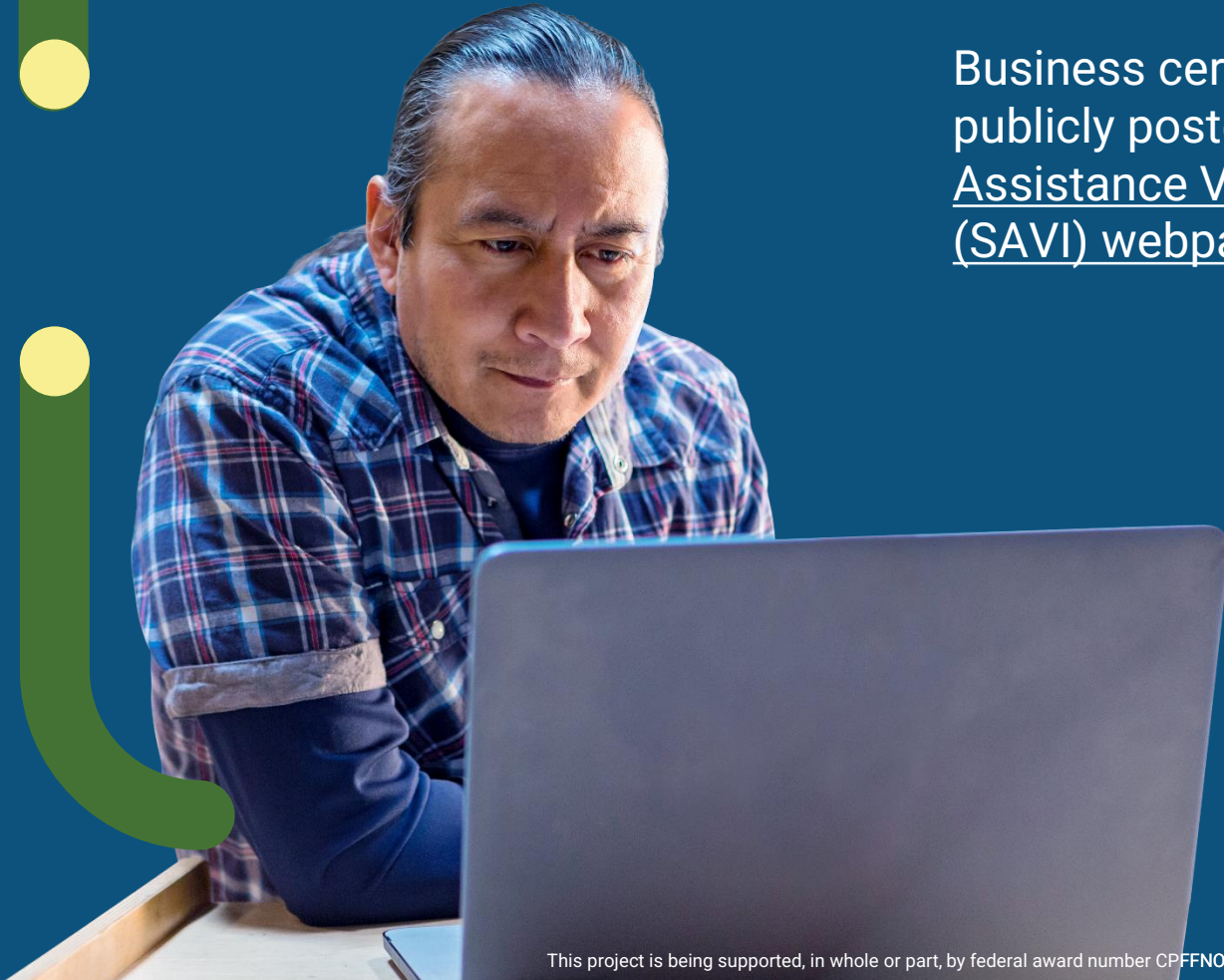
Applicant commits to a good faith subcontracting plan to contract with or employ **a certified small business, minority owned business, socially and economically disadvantaged business enterprise, veteran-owned business, and other businesses certifications made by the NJ Department of Treasury**

Business certifications are publicly posted on the [Selective Assistance Vendor Information \(SAVI\) webpage](#)



Small Business Subcontracting

Up to **10** Points



9



Minimization of NJBIDE Outlay

Up to **10** Points

Projects will be prioritized based on **how much NJBIDE funding they are requesting relative to a reference price** that OBC will determine for the project area they will serve

Applicants who request NJBIDE funding equal to the reference price will be awarded 5 points, while applicants who request less than the reference price will be awarded points in proportion to how much funding they are requesting, with a maximum of 10 points if no funding is requested

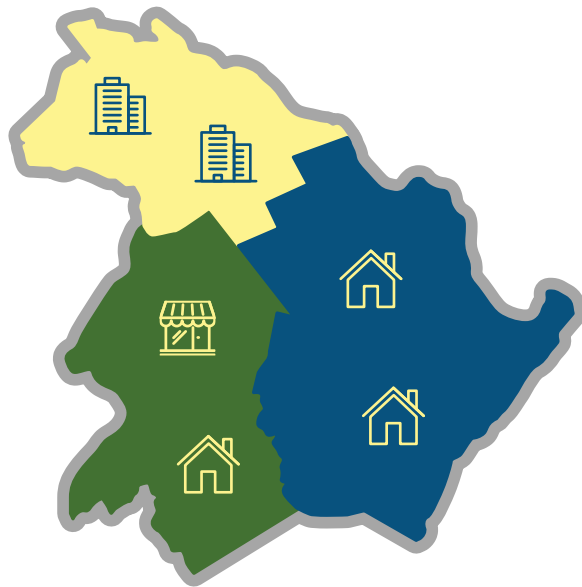
Requests for funding that exceed the reference price will not receive points



NJBIDE Pilot Program reference price model

ILLUSTRATIVE

Project areas are made up of contiguous Census Block Groups (CBGs)



■ Example Project Area
 ■ CBG 1 ■ CBG 2 ■ CBG 3

🏠 🏢 🏠 Unserved / underserved Broadband Serviceable (BSLs)

Each CBG has a reference price, which are added together to give a project area reference price¹

CBG 1	\$1,500
CBGs with manageable investment costs: Reference price capped at \$1,000 per BSL	
CBG 2	\$2,000
CBGs with higher investment costs, but favorable long-term cost and revenue projections: higher reference prices for greater fiber build costs	
CBG 3	\$4,500
CBGs with higher investment costs and projected operating deficits: higher reference prices for areas with unfavorable long-term cost and revenue projections	

Project Area Reference Price **A** **\$8,000**

The project area reference price is used as a benchmark to evaluate the applicant's funding request²

Applicant requests funding for a Project Area

CBG 1	} B \$4,800 Applicant requested funding amount
CBG 2	
CBG 3	

Applicant is scored (10 possible points)

5 points will be awarded if requested funding is equal to or below the reference price

A **\$8,000** > **B** **\$4,800** = **5 points**

Additional points will be awarded in proportion to how far below the reference price the request is

$$\frac{\text{A } \$8,000 - \text{B } \$4,800}{\text{A } \$8,000} \times 5 = 2 \text{ points}$$

7 points

1. Illustrative numbers; CBG reference prices are based on estimated total investment cost and estimated total net present value
 2. Merit Criteria: Minimization of NJBIDE Outlay

10

The project primarily serves locations that are located in **economically distressed communities** disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and have a higher risk for future disaster due to lack of investment and access to essential services such as broadband

Projects targeting the highest proportion of vulnerable locations, as measured by the Center for Disease Control's Social Vulnerability Index (SVI), will be prioritized



Highest Need

Up to **10** Points

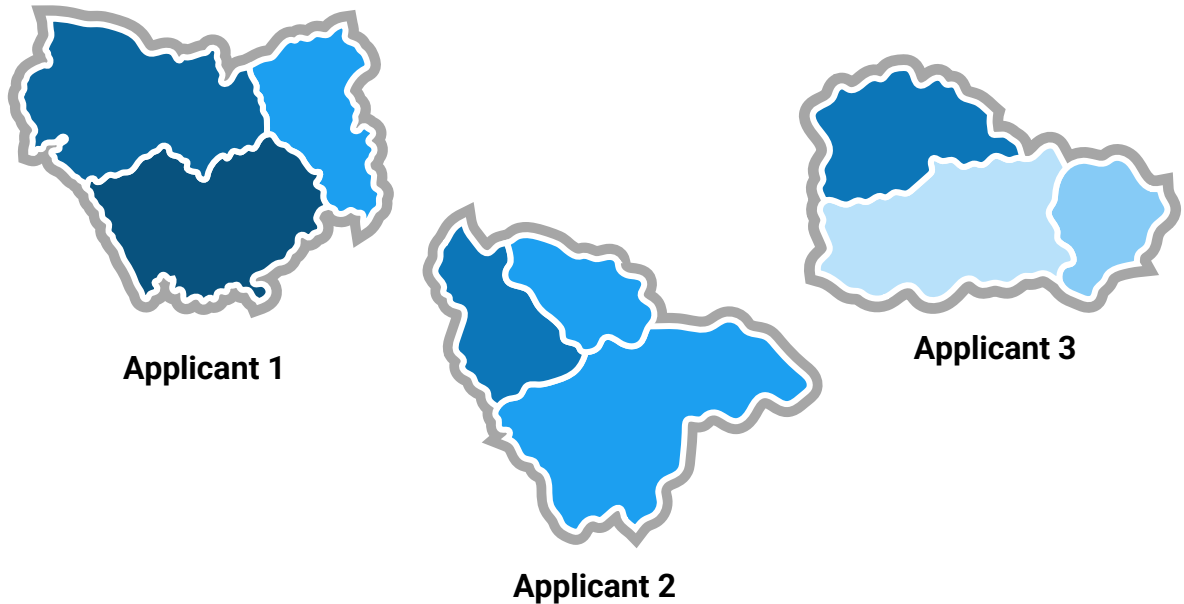
Points under the Highest Need criterion are awarded based on the average Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) of the project area

ILLUSTRATIVE

SVI measures areas with the highest socioeconomic disadvantages, vulnerable populations, limited healthcare and transportation access, and poor housing conditions

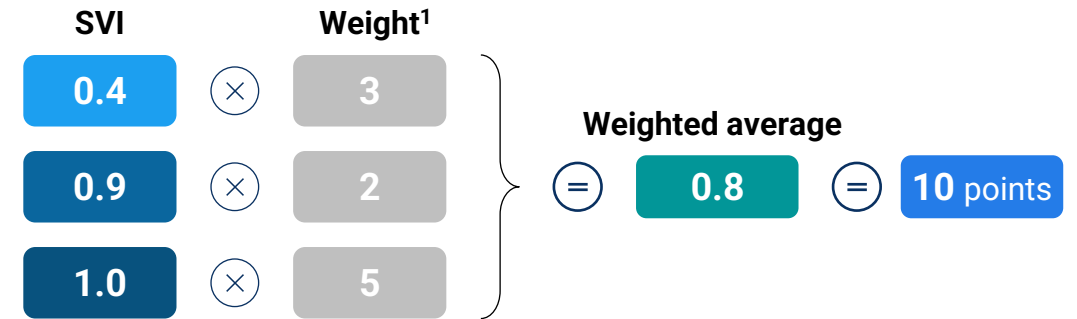
Project areas are made up of contiguous Census Block Groups (CBGs) and each Census Block has a Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) associated with it

Less disadvantaged (lower SVI)  More disadvantaged (higher SVI)



Project prioritizing areas with the highest weighted SVI will receive full points, while other applications will receive points proportional to their weighted SVI

Applicant 1



Applicant 2* = 0.4 = 5 points

Applicant 3* = 0.2 = 2.5 points

1. Weighted by the number of unserved/underserved BSLs of each CBG
 * Calculated using the same methodology as Applicant 1

Upon the close of the application period, and throughout the evaluation and scoring process, **a blackout period will be in effect** until the announcement of awards

During this blackout period, **applicants shall not initiate contact with the OBC**, except as otherwise provided within this part

The **OBC reserves the right to initiate contact with an applicant** to seek clarification of an application or the data contained therein, request additional information, or as necessary in response to an overlapping project area

Applicants may contact the OBC solely to **amend an application** due to overlapping project areas or to withdraw an application

Here are 5 steps you can take to get involved!

