

NJBIDE Pilot Program application

Technical assistance webinar #1

This session will be recorded

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Slides updated January 16, 2025

Introductions



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Agenda

NJBIDE overview (objective, timeline, resources)

Frequently asked questions

Changes to application submission process

Accessing data on NJBIDE-eligible locations

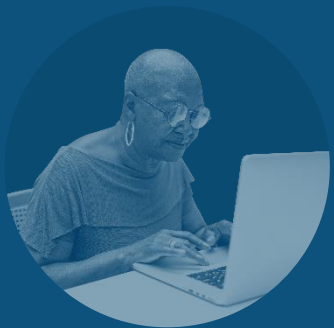
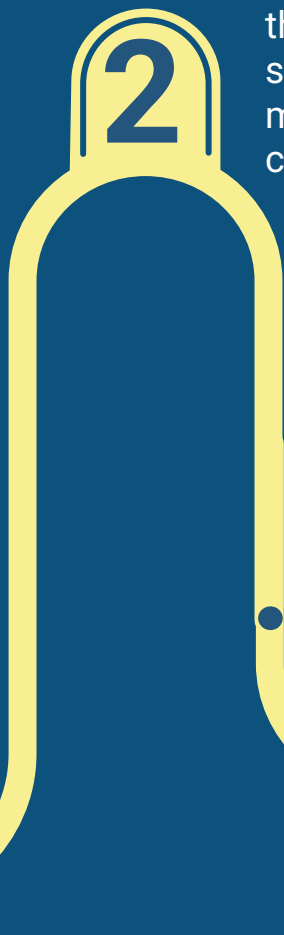
Community engagement

Affordability

Other upcoming grants

Path to NJBIDE

The COVID-19 public health emergency highlighted the nationwide digital divide, emphasizing the need for investment in connectivity.



The U.S. Department of the Treasury approved New Jersey's plan to invest \$52.7 million in CPF funding for broadband projects.



As part of the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the Capital Project Fund (CPF) allocated \$10 billion for states and other eligible entities to invest in high-quality, modern infrastructure to support communities' critical needs as they recover from the pandemic.



New Jersey launched the NJBIDE pilot program, allocating \$40 million of CPF funding for broadband infrastructure projects. This competitive grant program aims to deliver internet service with speeds of 100/100 Mbps upon project completion in economically disadvantaged areas across the state.



NJBIDE opens for applications on November 18, 2024.



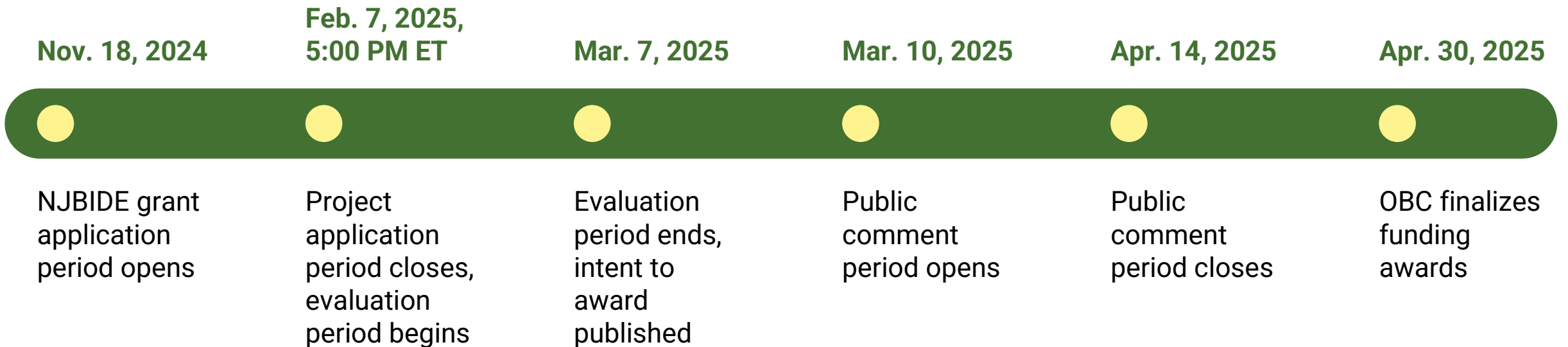
NJBIDE Pilot Program fast facts

New Jersey Broadband Infrastructure Deployment Equity (NJBIDE)

- Applications close February 7, 2025, at 5:00PM
- Projects to be substantively complete no later than **December 31, 2026**
- Prioritizing investment in **six counties** with lower access to reliable and affordable high-speed broadband service (Atlantic, Burlington, Cumberland, Essex, Salem, and Warren) and other communities experiencing social vulnerability

\$52.7M
In funding

The NJBIDE application timeline



Available resources for NJBIDE applicants



- 1 Application Instructions
- 2 Application Intake Form
- 3 Information guides
 - NJBIDE Application Overview
 - Scoring and Evaluation Criteria
- 4 Application Intake Form Walkthrough video
- 5 Regularly updated FAQ document

To access all these resources, visit the [NJBIDE resource hub](#)

How to apply to NJBIDE

1 Fill out the Application Intake Form

2 Fill out all other required documents (Listed on the NJBIDE [Resources for Applicants](#) page)

3 Submit all required documents to the BPU e-Filing System (Infoshare) referencing Docket No. T023100776

A BPU e-Filing System Walkthrough has been posted on the [Resources for Applicants](#) page



Webinar Agenda



The remaining time of this webinar will be devoted to answering technical questions we have received from applicants.

If you have questions during the presentation, please write them in the chat, and they will be answered at the end.

Required documents submission

Applicants should submit all NJBIDE application materials through BPU's e-Filing system ("BPU External Access" or "Infoshare") instead of the SAGE/IGX portal. Applicants have already been asked to submit their shapefiles via the e-Filing system, so this change simply involves uploading the entirety of their application package instead of just the shapefiles.

Please refer to the following resources that can be found on the NJBIDE Applicant Resources webpage:

- **Required documents checklist**
- **BPU e-Filing System Walkthrough**

When submitting your files, please make sure to reference the docket number TO23100776 and to mark your documents as confidential. Detailed guidance on how to do this is provided in the Walkthrough.

Project Area definition – accessing data on NJBIDE eligible locations

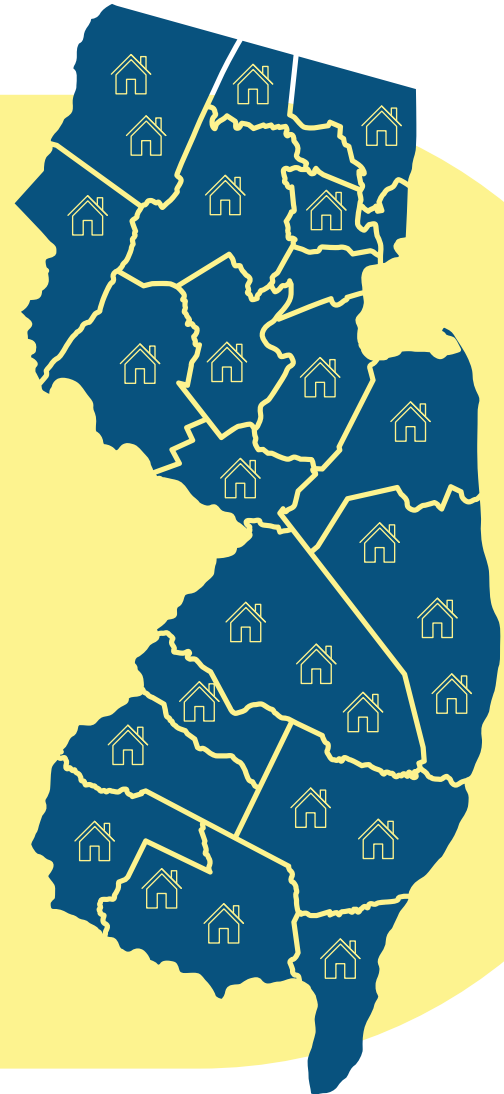
- 1** What information must an applicant submit relating to project area definition?
- 2** Where can an organization obtain a list of potentially eligible BSLs and their locations?

NJBIDE project area requirements

A **project area** is comprised of at least one Census Block Group (CBG). Project areas may comprise multiple municipalities and/or counties, provided that the project area remains contiguous.

Applicants must agree to serve **all unserved and underserved locations and community anchor institutions** in their proposed project area.

Applicants are welcome to service other customers and to include the associated costs in their proposed project budget, provided those locations do not have an enforceable federal or state commitment as described in the Application Instructions.



NJBIDE applicants are required to serve all unserved and underserved locations and community anchor institutions in their proposed project area

Definitions

Unserved location

The term “unserved location” means a broadband-serviceable location that the FCC Broadband DATA Maps show as (a) having no access to broadband service, or (b) lacking access to Reliable Broadband Service offered with—(i) a speed of not less than 25 Mbps for downloads; and (ii) a speed of not less than 3 Mbps for uploads; and (iii) latency less than or equal to 100 milliseconds.

Underserved location

The term “underserved location” means a broadband-serviceable location that is (a) not an unserved location, and (b) that the Broadband DATA Maps show as lacking access to Reliable Broadband Service offered with—(i) a speed of not less than 100 Mbps for downloads; and (ii) a speed of not less than 20 Mbps for uploads; and (iii) latency less than or equal to 100 milliseconds.

Community Anchor Institution

A community anchor institution means an entity, such as a school, library, health clinic, health center, hospital or other medical provider, public safety entity, institution of higher education, public housing organization, or community support organization that facilitates greater use of broadband service by vulnerable populations, including, but not limited to, low-income individuals, unemployed individuals, children, the incarcerated, and aged individuals.

Applicants will need to submit the following outputs relating to their defined project areas



Network Diagram

Must visually depict the entire project area, including

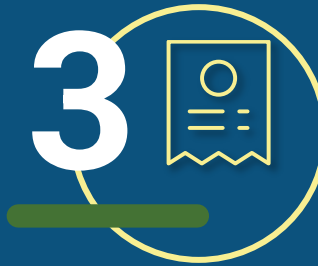
- A** The wireline route and/or the location of tower placements
- B** A point for each location proposed to be passed and serviceable by the project



Geospatial files (shapefiles) of the project area and the proposed locations to be served

The geospatial files must include

- A** The wireline route and/or the location of tower placements
- B** A point for each eligible location proposed to be passed and serviceable by the project (including their location IDs)
- C** A multi-polygon showing the boundaries of the project area



List of CBGs to be served in excel format

Applicants must:

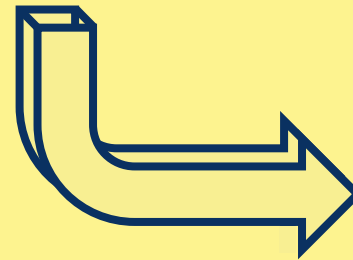
- Fill in the “Project Area” sheet of the application intake form, which can be found on the NJBIDE website
- Provide the Geographic Identifiers (GEOIDs) for each Census Block Group within the project area

Available resources for NJBIDE project area definition

1 GIS map of New Jersey that maps unserved and underserved locations

This map can show the number of eligible locations by:

- Census block
- County
- Municipality
- Permit area & Qualified Census Tract
- Social vulnerability index

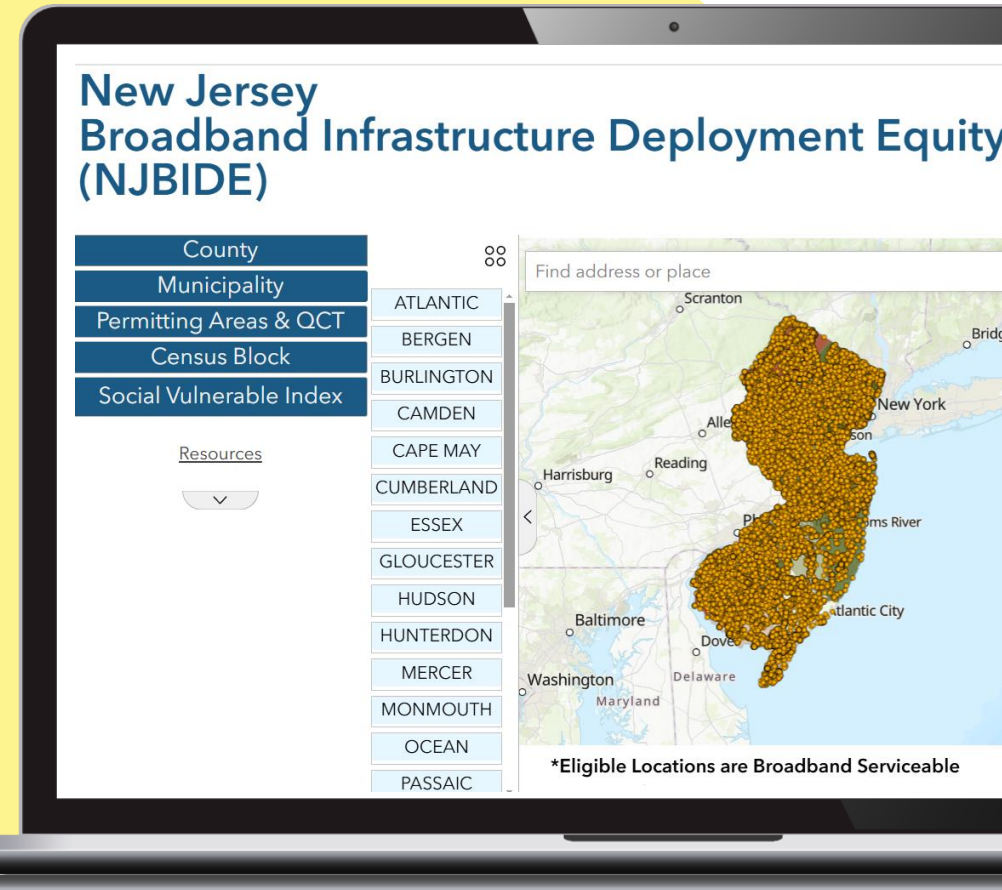


2 Lists of location IDs

Each eligible location has a unique location ID

Eligible
BSL(s)

Eligible
CAI(s)



Note: Eligible location data has been updated over time

Source: [CPF website](#)

To obtain the coordinates of unserved and underserved BSLs, applicants should access the Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric

OBC is not allowed to disclose coordinates for each location ID, but prospective applicants can get this information using the Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric, which can be accessed by obtaining a no-cost Tier D license from CostQuest

The Broadband Serviceable Location Fabric (Fabric) is a dataset of all locations in the United States and its Territories where fixed broadband internet access service is or could be installed

The Fabric file is a .csv file that includes the unique location_id for each location, the latitude/longitude for each location record as well as other attribute information

The Fabric is available to recipients, sub-recipients, and prospective recipients of federal broadband funds from Federal Broadband Granting Agencies through a Tier D license

Due to processing time, applicants should request an NTIA license as soon as possible.

Instructions for requesting a Tier D license:





Agenda

NJBIDE recap and webinar overview

Accessing data on NJBIDE-eligible locations

Community engagement

Affordability

Additional Funding Sources



Applicants will need to submit the following outputs relating to community engagement



Community engagement plan

Upload PDF document detailing existing or planned efforts to ensure community involvement



Plan to encourage user connection

Fill in the “Proposed Services” sheet of the Application Intake Form, which can be found on the NJBIDE website



Evidence of community support

Upload PDF documents that demonstrate community engagement

Every application must include a document that describes the applicant's community engagement plan



Each applicant should describe their existing or planned strategies to ensure active community involvement and transparency throughout the project lifecycle, from the initial planning stages through post-deployment



Note

Community engagement and public feedback processes are considered eligible costs

In the Application Intake Form, applicants are required to address their plan for user adoption

On the **Proposed Services** sheet of the Application Intake Form, in **column C row 7**, applicants should detail their plan to encourage users to connect, incorporating, at a minimum:

- Community education forums
- Marketing programs
- Multimedia advertising



Community engagement will also serve as a factor in application scoring

Applicants may demonstrate community engagement by providing supporting documentation of¹:

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

1. The following list is non-exhaustive
Source: [NJBIDE Application Instructions](#)



There are several ways applicants might engage their communities throughout the project lifecycle

Potential ways to engage with your community:



Request letters of support



Draft surveys



Host information sessions (in person or webinars) describing NJBIDE



Host listening sessions (to learn about broadband needs and challenges)



Host small group interviews (to learn about broadband needs and challenges)



Develop partnerships that enable access to populations of end users

- E.g., the Salvation Army, the American Association of Retired Persons



Note

Use this list as a **starting point** for brainstorming ways to engage your community. Focus on gathering evidence **that best demonstrates your project's impact and connection to the community.** Don't feel limited by this list – your unique approach is valued.



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Monthly prices for broadband services must be affordable

Applicants can receive up to ten points for:

- Having at least one Broadband Service subscription plan offering a **minimum of 100/20 service¹ for less than \$65 per month**
- Offering eligible **low-income households service for less than \$30 per month after federal subsidy programs**

1. Please note that projects must aim to provide symmetrical download and upload speeds of at least 100 Mbps to all proposed locations. If achieving 100/100 Mbps is impractical due to documented geographic, topographic, or cost constraints supported with evidence from the affected community, the project offers a minimum 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload speeds scalable to at least 100/100 Mbps.



Every application must include the process it followed to address affordability in the areas it intends to serve with NJBIDE grant funds

Applicants must demonstrate that their operating plans are feasible given that they will have at least one affordable broadband plan (as described on the prior page).

To substantiate their operating plans, **applicants must submit a PDF document** describing how they have considered affordability in their proposed service offerings or how they *will* consider affordability if awarded NJBIDE funding.

Applicants may use data from surveys, community engagement, existing studies, or other data to justify the affordability of their broadband service.¹

1. This list is non-exhaustive

Affordability reporting

The service provider also agrees to report pricing data to the OBC for program performance monitoring and to ensure compliance with affordability requirements. This reporting obligation will continue until the federal interest period expires on December 31, 2034.¹



1. "Federal interest" refers to the period during which the federal government retains a financial interest in projects funded by the Capital Projects Fund (CPF). This period typically lasts for the "useful life" of the funded asset, which, in the case of broadband infrastructure, is often considered to be 10 years

Additional funding sources

1

Are there any other upcoming broadband grant programs?

Other upcoming grant programs

As a reminder...

- NJBIDE projects must be substantially complete no later than **December 31, 2026**
- NJBIDE is prioritizing investment in **six counties** with lower access to reliable and affordable high-speed broadband service (Atlantic, Burlington, Cumberland, Essex, Salem, and Warren) and communities experiencing social vulnerability

Thus, potential applicants may consider the following other funding source in place of or in addition to NJBIDE funding:

Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD):

- Prioritizing investment in connecting **all unserved and underserved locations statewide** that are not covered by NJBIDE
- Project implementation to be completed by **December 2029**

Questions?