

BEAD PROGRAM UPDATE & THE INITIAL PROPOSAL VOLUME II

October 26, 2023

AGENDA



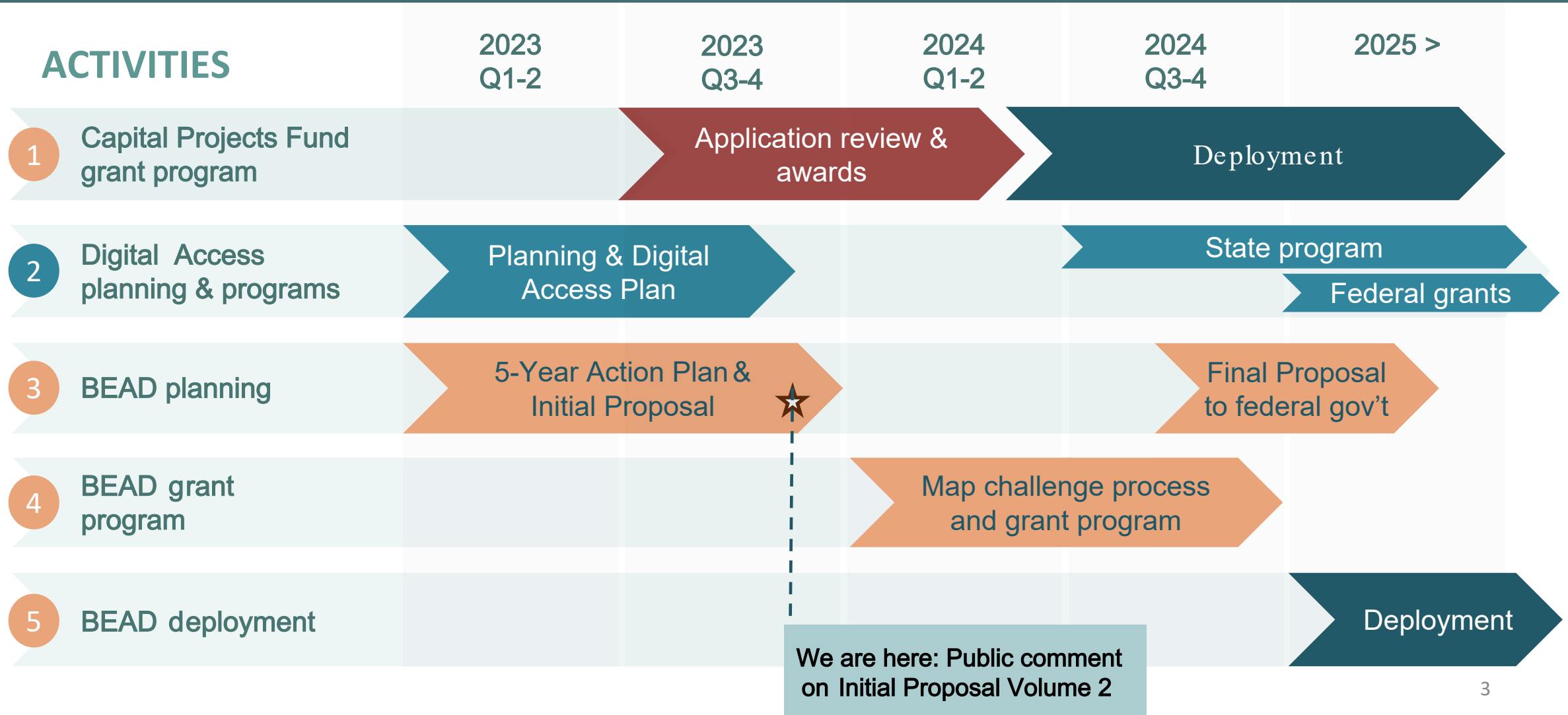
Overall status and timeline

Overview of the BEAD program

The Initial Proposal Volume II

Next steps

OVERALL STATUS & TIMELINE



OVERVIEW OF THE BEAD PROGRAM

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In June, Wyoming was allocated \$348 million of federal BEAD funds that will become available following completion of the federal planning cycle.

Funds are prioritized for unserved locations first—those that cannot get internet service of 25/3 Mbps— & underserved second--those that can get internet service between 25/3 & 100/20 Mbps only.

By the end of the year, WBO will have submitted three BEAD plans to the federal government. Today's presentation concerns one of those plans: the second volume of the BEAD Initial Proposal, on which WBO seeks public comment.

BEAD planning

2023

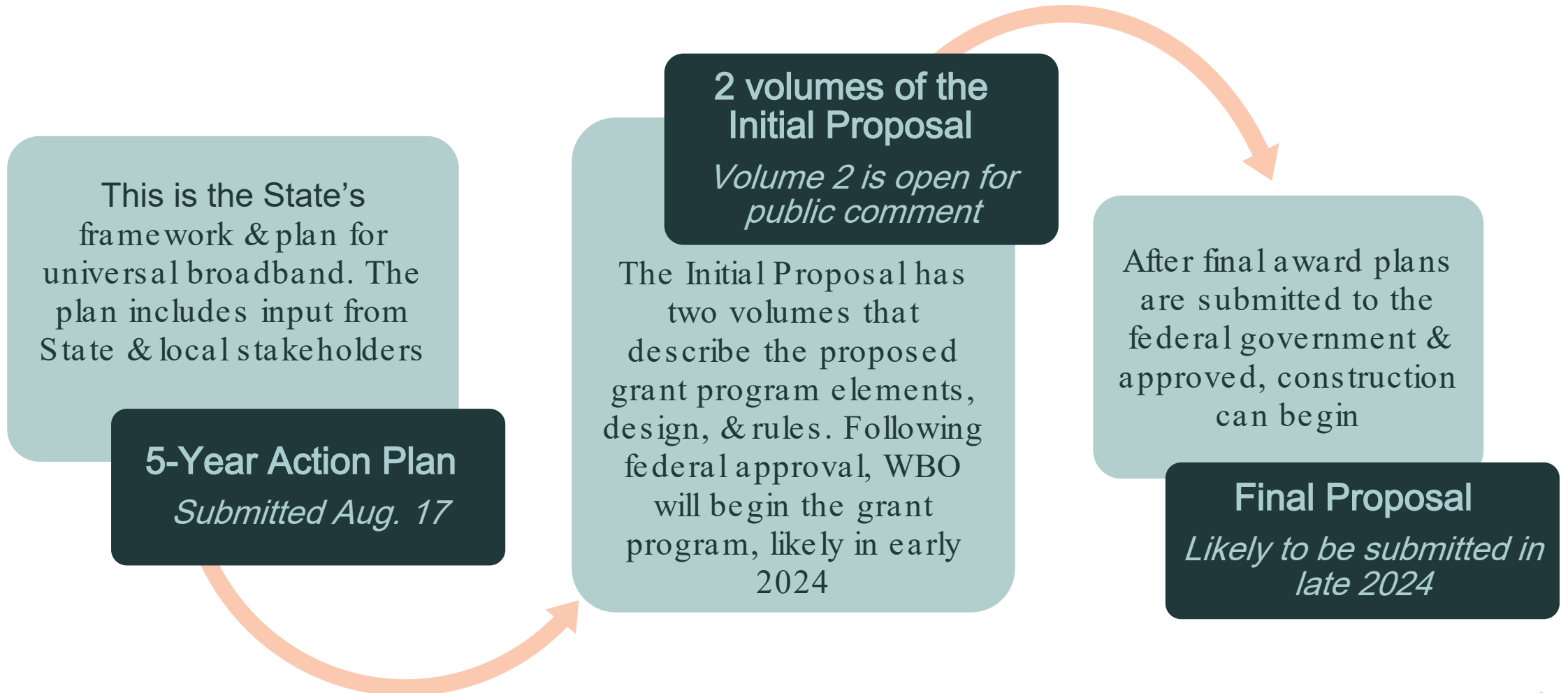
Provisional grant program

2024

Deployment

2025

BEAD PLAN STATUS



BEAD GRANT PROGRAM TIMELINE

◆ NTIA approval required

Activity	2023			2024											
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Update briefing	◆														
Public comment 30 days		■													
Revision and finalization			■												
Submission to NTIA															
NTIA review				■	■	■	■	◆							
Challenge Process 90-120 days				■	■	■	■	■	◆						
Grant program 120 days									■	■	■	■			
Negotiations											■	■			
Final Proposal												■	■	■	◆

THE INITIAL PROPOSAL VOLUME II

OVERVIEW OF THE INITIAL PROPOSAL



The Initial Proposal describes how WBO plans to administer the BEAD grant program

Initial Proposal Volume I

Public comment period is complete

- Describes how WBO will run a “challenge process” in 2024 to finalize the list of locations eligible for funding
- Describes how WBO has defined “community anchor institution” & lists those that lack service

Initial Proposal Volume II

Public comment period is currently open

- Describes how WBO will structure the grant application & process, as well as the scoring criteria & rules for participation
- Public comment period closes Nov. 17

INITIAL PROPOSAL REQUIRED ELEMENTS (1/2)



Key Sections of Initial
Proposal Volume II

- 1 **Objectives:** State's goals related to broadband deployment and closing the digital divide
- 2 **Existing efforts:** What the State is currently doing to close the digital divide and coordinate with local stakeholders
- 3 **Federal funding:** Federally funded broadband programs are taking place in the State
- 4 **Stakeholder engagement:** How the State coordinated and plans continued collaboration with tribal governments, community organizations, and other important stakeholders in the BEAD deployment process
- 5 **Eligible broadband serviceable locations (BSLs):** List of the unserved and underserved locations within the State that are not currently being served by another broadband construction (enforceable funding commitment)
- 6 **Community anchor institutions (CAIs):** List of community anchor institutions exist within the State lacking gigabit symmetrical internet
- 7 **Challenge process:** How the State will conduct a challenge process to ensure that the eligible BSL list is accurate before running its BEAD grant program (subgrantee selection process)
- 8 **Subgrantee process:** How the State plans to select subgrant awards for ISPs to build broadband to unserved and if possible, underserved BSLs
- 9 **Non-deployment process:** If the State has remaining funds from its BEAD allocation after building internet infrastructure, how the State plans to spend those funds to achieve NTIA's and its own broadband deployment goals
- 10 **Direct implementation:** Any BEAD activities that the State intends to do itself

INITIAL PROPOSAL REQUIRED ELEMENTS (2/2)



Key Sections of Initial Proposal Volume II

- 11 **Labor standards:** How will the State ensure that its subgrantees are abiding by federal, state, and local labor laws?
- 19 **Workforce readiness:** How the State will ensure that there is a diverse, qualified workforce for subgrantees to draw upon in completing BEAD deployment activities
- 13 **Minority businesses:** Steps the State will proactively take to ensure that minority-owned businesses are aware of available BEAD funding within the State and have the tools needed to compete for that funding
- 14 **Costs and barriers:** What the State is doing to lower regulatory costs and barriers to broadband deployment
- 15 **Climate assessment:** How the State plans to mitigate the natural hazard risk to BEAD infrastructure
- 16 **Low-cost plan:** How the State plans to ensure that the broadband service provided using the BEAD-subsidized infrastructure is affordable to those in lower income bracket
- 17 **20% funding:** The State will ask for 100% of its allocated BEAD funding upon submission of its initial proposal (per fed. gov't advice)
- 18 **Local laws:** State regulations that would prohibit public-sector entities from competing for BEAD funds
- 19 **Certification:** How the State will hold subgrantees accountable to their project proposals
- 20 **Middle-class affordability:** How the State ensure that the broadband service provided using the BEAD-subsidized infrastructure is affordable to those in the middle class

INITIAL PROPOSAL VOLUME II



Volume II addresses 16 federal requirements, of which these are four critical elements

Grant program structure

Describes how WBO plans to structure and manage the grant program, including how grant funding areas will be determined

Scoring criteria

Describes how WBO plans to award points for each application, based on federal requirements for scoring and the state's priorities

Mandatory low -cost service offering

Describes how WBO plans to require awardees to comply with the federal requirement that all awardees offer a low-cost option to low-income households

Application requirements

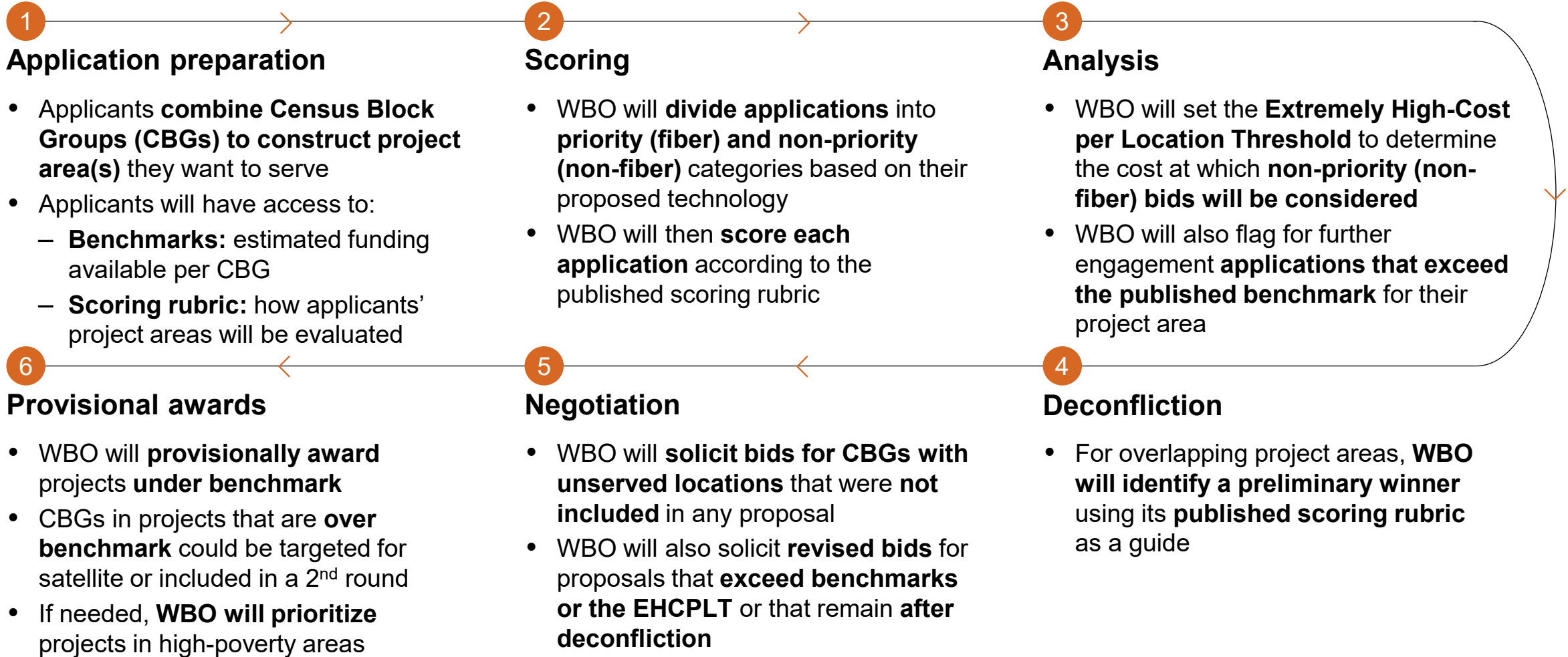
Describes the information and certifications that WBO will require in all applications, to align with both federal and state requirements

BACKGROUND: FEDERAL RULES FRAME & CONTAIN STATE DECISION MAKING



- All states are obligated to develop a solution for 100% of unserved locations, but funds may not allow for this
- **Unserved locations** are first priority for funds
- **Fiber must be prioritized**, with other technologies funded only if fiber is too costly in a given area
- **Cost** is a major, mandatory factor in scoring
- Timeline is compressed
- Structure of the grant program is left to states to determine, subject to federal approval

WBO'S PROPOSED GRANT STRUCTURE



ISSUE FOR COMMENT: DESIGN OF GRANT AREAS

1

Federal rules allow states to design the grant areas themselves or enable applicants to propose their own grant areas.

2

WBO proposes to allow applicants to combine census block groups to construct their project areas. The minimum unit will be the census block group to reduce overlap and to ensure all locations in a census block group are included. Applicants will have access to WBO's scoring rubric and benchmark pricing as tools to help them develop applications.

Potential issues for comment

1. Is the census block group the appropriate minimum geographic area for grants?
2. Should applicants have this opportunity to design grant areas by combining census block groups?

ISSUE FOR COMMENT: APPLICATION SCORING



Federal rules prescribe how applications can be scored, assigning 75% of points to

1. Cost
2. Pricing of a symmetrical gigabit product
3. Compliance with labor standards

Federal rules also require inclusion in scoring for **speed to deployment** and, for “non-Priority” (non-fiber) projects, **technology capability** .

WBO can propose how they will score with the remaining points.

Potential issues for comment

1. Has WBO proposed the appropriate criteria for the points states can select?
2. Should any element of WBO’s scoring criteria and weighting be revised?

PRIORITY PROJECT SCORING RUBRIC



Primary criteria	Value
Minimal BEAD program outlay Higher points awarded to proposals that fall within a certain percentage of the cost model benchmark	50
Affordability Commitment to provide most affordable total price to consumer for 1G/1G service (or 100MB/20MB for non-priority projects)	15
Fair labor practices Higher points awarded to applicants with no labor/employment violations and commitment to labor practices	10
TOTAL	75

Secondary criteria	Value
Speed to deployment Commitment to provide service earlier than four-year deadline	9
Unserved BSLs Ratio of unserved to total BSLs in the proposed project area	6
Service in Wyoming Points awarded according to current utilities service in Wyoming	4
Natural hazard risk mitigation Score across risk mitigation dimensions identified by NTIA as part of the natural hazard assessment	3
Local and tribal coordination Number of local/tribal governments that have provided letters of support for the subgrantee's proposal	3
TOTAL	25

NON-PRIORITY PROJECT SCORING RUBRIC



Primary criteria	Value	Secondary criteria	Value
Minimal BEAD program outlay Higher points awarded to proposals that fall within a certain percentage of the cost model benchmark	50	Speed to deployment Commitment to provide service earlier than four-year deadline	7
Affordability Commitment to provide most affordable total price to consumer for 1G/1G service (or 100MB/20MB for non-priority projects)	15	Speed of network and other technical capabilities Comparison of speed between technology and fiber	6
Fair labor practices Higher points awarded to applicants with no labor/employment violations and commitment to labor practices	10	Unserved BSLs Ratio of unserved to underserved BSLs included in a proposed project	3
		Service in Wyoming Points awarded according to length of current utilities service in Wyoming	3
		Natural hazard risk mitigation Score across risk mitigation dimensions identified by NTIA as part of the natural hazard risk assessment	3
		Local and tribal coordination Number of local/tribal governments that have provided letters of support for the subgrantee's proposal	3
TOTAL	75	TOTAL	25

ISSUE FOR COMMENT: REQUIRED LOW-INCOME SERVICE OFFERING



1

Federal rules require states to define a mandatory low-cost service offering that grant awardees must offer to low-income households.

2

WBO proposes to require recipients of BEAD funds to offer a 100/20 service offering to low-income households that is priced at \$60, exclusive of taxes and fees. Consistent with federal guidance, this product would be available to households earning up to 200% of the federal poverty line.

Potential issues for comment

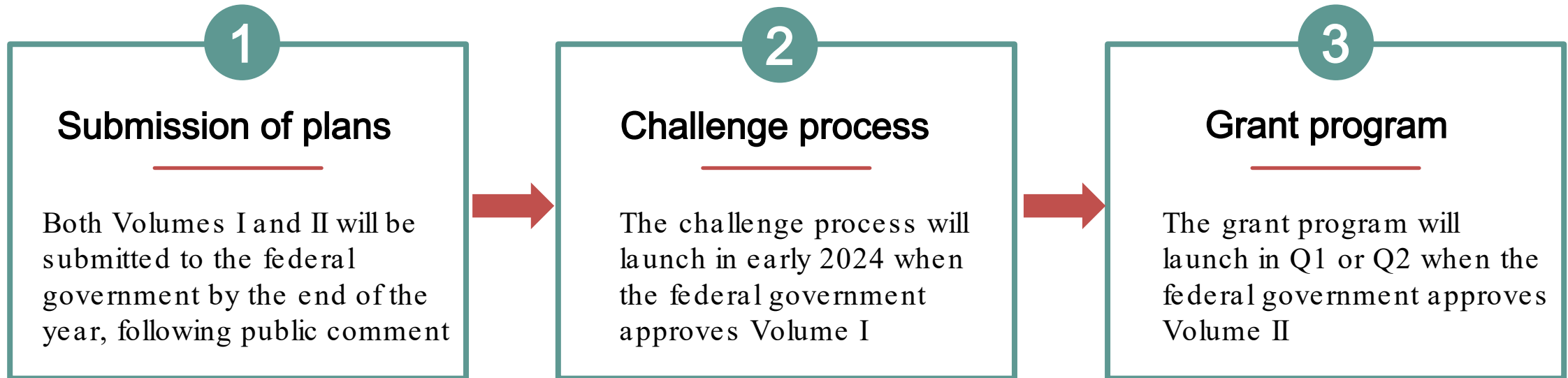
1. Is the \$60 service fee appropriate for low-income Wyoming households?
2. Is the eligibility level (200% of federal poverty) appropriate?

NEXT STEPS



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Following submission of the plans in 2023, 2024's activities will involve executing the challenge process and grant program





CONNECT WITH US

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the BEAD grant program