

PROSPERITY THROUGH A CONNECTED FLORIDA

The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity's (DEO), Office of Broadband (Office) is requesting Initial Planning Funds through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program to support our goal of offering accessible, affordable, and reliable broadband internet service to the citizens of Florida. **Our proposed project, Prosperity Through a Connected Florida**, includes a comprehensive Five-Year Action Plan that will identify Florida's broadband internet availability and affordability, incorporate the Florida Digital Adoption and Use Plan, and serve as a benchmark for adopting strategies, goals, and measures to successfully connect all Floridians. The project will also include a proposed timeline for deployment of broadband internet service to each unserved location in Florida.

The project is focused on advancing the objectives of the BEAD Program in conjunction with the Florida Strategic Plan for Broadband, including deploying broadband internet to all unserved locations and identifying the most efficient deployment models. To do so, the project intends to utilize the following eligible activities:

- 1) Conduct Research and Data Collection.
- 2) Provide Technical Assistance.
- 3) Increase the Operating Capacity of the Office of Broadband.
- 4) Perform Asset Mapping.
- 5) Assist with Local Coordination and Contracted Support.

Activity 1) Conduct Research and Data Collection: Includes compiling the research and data collected from the established Local Technology Planning Teams (LTPTs) into a comprehensive list created from their workshops and surveys and identifying priorities in line with the Prosperity Through a Connected Florida Program. The intended outcome of Activity 1 is to formulate a roadmap of data-driven priorities for program implementation. Research and data collection will also support our Five-Year Action Plan and program objectives by identifying and prioritizing unserved locations while also identifying barriers and solutions to deployment within those areas.

Activity 2) Provide Technical Assistance: Includes ten (10) planned workshops throughout Florida to discuss the LTPTs' findings and recommendations, and to seek input from the public on those recommendations. Part of each workshop will be dedicated to interaction with potential program applicants to ensure a greater understanding of the project and answer any questions they may have regarding the application process. Completing Activity 2 will result in potential applicants having good working knowledge of the application process and the broadband internet activity priorities established by the Prosperity Through a Connected Florida Project.

Activity 3) Increase Operating Capacity of the Office of Broadband: Planning funds both support the development of the Five-Year Action Plan and BEAD program objectives by beginning the process of increasing Office staff capacity and equipment to ensure efficient processing of all project applications received, providing technical assistance throughout the application process, performing oversight of the projects, and efficient processing of project invoices. Completing Activity 3 will result in sufficient capacity to ensure a well operating program with easy access to staff by potential applicants and subgrantees while

ensuring compliance with all pertinent rules and regulations. This enhanced capacity will also ensure there is no duplication of benefits and provide for a seamless transition between application, award, monitoring, and closeout.

Activity 4) Perform Asset Mapping: Includes development of a central record of relevant assets to include funding, current broadband internet plans, and existing infrastructure. Completing Activity 4 will result in better leverage of funding and existing infrastructure, reduced deployment costs, avoidance of unintentional damage of equipment or infrastructure, and acceleration of deployment. Asset mapping will be used to leverage the proposed projects under BEAD as well as ensuring no duplication of benefits occurs.

Activity 5) Assist with Local Coordination and Contracted Support: Includes funding to the LTPTs in support of public engagement and to provide perspective on broadband internet gaps, needs, and strategies. In addition, the Office intends to engage with qualified contractors/consultants in developing the Five-Year Action Plan, Initial Proposal, Asset Mapping, and more detailed broadband internet mapping. Completing Activity 5 will address the greatest in-depth local needs and priorities along with establishing a regional platform to share assets, ideas, recommendations, and to prioritize projects related to the unserved population. Utilizing the enhanced Broadband Mapping and Asset Mapping will facilitate the development of the Five -Year Action Plan in concert with the Florida Broadband Strategic Plan and Florida’s Digital Adoption and Use Plan to provide an excellent blueprint for implementation of successful deployment to meet our project goals.

Project Partners

The funds awarded through the BEAD Program will be used to help support the above project activities. The Office will have multiple partners, including:

- 1) **67 Local Technology Planning Teams (LTPTs)** established under Section 288.9961(4)(b), Florida Statutes, which will support Activities 1, 2, 4, and 5.
- 2) **State Agencies**, including Departments of Education, Agriculture, Transportation, Health, and Children and Families.
- 3) **Broadband Infrastructure and Service Providers** which will support Activities 1, 2, 4, and 5.
- 4) **Contracted Consultants** who will support drafting the Five-Year Plan, Creating Enhanced Broadband Mapping, and creating of comprehensive Asset Mapping. Each of our identified partners will support the execution of funded activities.

Additionally, the Office works in coordination with other federal, state, tribal, and local entities to facilitate broadband internet availability. The Office is the administering agent for the **Prosperity Through a Connected Florida** Project and will be the recipient of Initial Planning Funds. As the administering agent, the Office will oversee all procurement and planning activities including budget development, office expansion, and contract development activities.